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ABSTRACT

This guidebook presents a process to elicit and organize information about school district practices, proposes standards to judge the effectiveness of those practices, and provides a method for determining desired improvements. Following the introduction, section 2 contains a distillation of the research findings on school effectiveness along with a discussion of how district practices influence a school's ability to promote student achievement. Section 3 presents the areas covered in the audit and suggests standards for assessing district effectiveness. Sections 4 and 5 describe a step-by-step approach to conducting the audit. Included in section 6 are procedures for analyzing and interpreting information and recommendations for preparing and disseminating the report. Section 7 makes suggestions for planning district improvement. Section 8 consists of instruments to be used in the audit process--the interview guide and the questionnaire--while section 9 contains the forms to be used in analyzing the audit information and preparing the report. Appendices contain a 23-item bibliography along with names of board members and educators who collaborated in designing the audit. (MLF)

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SIZING UP YOUR SCHOOL SYSTEM

THE DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS AUDIT

by Joan Buttram, Thomas B. Corcoran, Barbara J. Hansen

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FOREWORD

The District Effectiveness Audit grew out of the New Jersey School Boards Association's commitment to help school districts turn the research findings on effective schools into practice. It is the result of a close collaboration with Research for Better Schools, Inc. and a number of board members and educators (named in Appendixes B and C). The time and energy they devoted to this project is deeply appreciated.

We are also grateful to Joan Abrams and Betty Steffy and the members of the boards of education of Red Bank Borough and Moorestown Township who offered their districts as the initial field test sites for the audit. And we extend thank yous to David Squires and Evelyn Ogden who handled the arrangements in those districts.

The legislation that created the New Jersey School Boards Association charged it to "aid all efforts to improve public education in New Jersey." We believe the District Effectiveness Audit is an important step in fulfilling that mission.

Dr. Francis J. Reed, Jr.

NJSBA Executive Director

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I.
INTRODUCTION

This guidebook contains all of the information and materials a school district needs to assess its capability to improve and support the effectiveness of its schools. It presents a process to elicit and organize information about district practices, proposes standards to judge the effectiveness of those practices, and provides a method for determining desired improvements.

This audit is designed to be used by boards of education and district administrators to determine how their actions influence student achievement in their district's schools. It was developed in response to an often-repeated question asked by board members and district administrators about the effective schools research. "It is fine," they said, "to know what factors make a school effective. But what does a *district* do to help create those conditions? That's the information I need to do my job right."

Providing an answer is not easy. While there is no shortage of books, papers and articles on the qualities of effective schools, only scant information exists on how district activities foster those qualities. Consequently, in addition to reviewing what had already been written on the topic, the originators of this guidebook convened two panels of experts. The first, the Task Force on District Effectiveness (see Appendix B), sifted through research findings on effective schools and organizational effectiveness in the private sector and, by inference, developed a list of factors to use in judging district effectiveness. This list was modified and validated by a second panel through a Delphi survey (see Appendix C). In addition, the authors sifted through the research literature for conclusions or inferences about district influences on school effectiveness. These findings were reviewed by the panels and their consensus eventually became the standards found in this guide.

Once the standards were identified, there arose a second question: How could board members and administrators find out if their districts met the standards? In seeking an answer, the idea of an audit was born. Like a financial audit, the *District Effectiveness Audit* involves a close examination of certain practices, but it focuses on management rather than finance.

The core of the audit is a series of interviews and the administration of a questionnaire. The data thus gathered are analyzed and a report is generated. The following sections explain in general and then in detail how the audit is conducted.

Two New Jersey school districts, Red Bank Borough and Moorestown Township, volunteered to be the initial test sites for the audit. In each district, the authors plus a

central office administrator served as the audit team. In Red Bank, which has two elementary schools, the authors conducted 19 interviews with board members, central office administrators, school administrators and selected teaching staff over a two-day period. The questionnaires were administered by a central office administrator to all teachers during 40-minute staff meetings. Moorestown's larger size (three elementary schools, a middle school and a high school) necessitated three days of interviewing with 34 board members and district and school administrators. Again, teachers filled out questionnaires during staff meetings.

These field tests were invaluable in refining the audit materials and procedures. Substantive changes were made as a result. The testing is continuing, however, and all users are invited—indeed, urged—to share their experiences with the authors. Send all comments to the New Jersey School Boards Association, 413 W. State Street, P.O. Box 909, Trenton, NJ 08605-0909.

Overview of the Audit Process

Anyone can initiate the audit. All it takes is an interest in improving a district's capability to support student achievement and a willingness to propose an audit to the district's board of education and chief school administrator. Once their commitment is secured, the audit process is underway.

The next step is the formation of an audit team. This team is made up of five to seven key people in the district—for example, two representatives of the central office, one or two principals, a couple of teachers, and one or two board members. If the district chooses to employ an external consultant to help conduct the audit, that person might also be a member of the audit team. The team is responsible for either conducting the audit or for overseeing the work of the consultant.

The audit is composed of two parts: a staff questionnaire and interviews with key people in the district. The questionnaire is distributed as widely as possible to those who are knowledgeable about district practices. Interviews are held with those who are responsible for developing and implementing policy. Evidence to support opinions is sought in the interviews and, where possible, checked against supporting documents. Some districts may wish to add a third component to the audit by reviewing budget and time allocations in terms of district goals.

After all of the information is gathered and compiled, the audit team or the consultant prepares a report comparing the district's practices against the audit standards and makes a presentation to the board of education. The report identifies strengths that the district should maintain as well as areas needing change or improvement. The completion of this report marks the end of the audit team's work and the beginning of active involvement by the board and administration.

The board's responsibility is to review the data and set goals, establish priorities, and develop improvement plans based on the findings of the audit. The district's administrative team plays a key role in this process by presenting the board with its recommendations. Other staff members, parents, and the community at large may also be involved in the district's improvement efforts. At the very least, they should be kept informed of the audit's progress, its findings, and the resulting plans.

What the Audit Achieves

When the audit is completed, district leaders have up-to-date information to help them establish district improvement goals in seven areas:

1. setting goals and standards,
2. defining and managing curriculum and program,
3. assuring quality,
4. allocating fiscal and human resources,
5. creating a positive climate,
6. making improvements, and
7. working with the community.

The district's practices in each area have been judged against specific practices shown to be supportive of school effectiveness. As a result, district leaders know more about their district's strengths and where improvement might be desired.

A successful audit leads to a regular program of review and assessment and ongoing re-creation of improvement goals and plans. Where such programs already exist, the audit provides another means for assessing the needs of the district—needs that may be difficult to uncover through other mechanisms. It should be noted, however, that the audit provides only a framework for analysis. It is not a formula for action. How the standards apply to specific situations and the best means to realize them are decisions to be made by those familiar with the local context. History, political environment and the availability of resources will shape interpretations of the audit. Ultimately, it is up to local decision makers to determine the meaning of the audit results and what actions, if any, should be taken.

A less tangible but equally important outcome of the audit is an increased sense of commitment to improvement within the district. Information is sought from a number of sources, creating a cadre of people interested in the outcome of the process. If these people are provided with the results of the audit and involved in determining follow-up actions, they are highly likely to be committed to the improvements sought.

What the Audit Does Not Do

The audit is narrowly focused. It looks only at the functions of the board of education and the district administration and, within that framework, deals solely with those aspects that are linked directly to instructional effectiveness. It does not, for example, examine the district's collective bargaining practices. Their exclusion, however, does not not mean they are any less critical to the functioning of the district. Nor does it presume that they have no impact on student achievement. Rather, it indicates that too little study has been done in those areas to include them in this process.

If the audit is to result in valid information for making improvement decisions, it must be implemented in a non-threatening way. The audit is not designed to evaluate individuals—staff or board members—and should not be used to do so. Its purpose is to gain information on *district* practices and any attempt to use it to assess the job performance of people will probably have disastrous results. Similarly, should school staff perceive the audit as an evaluation of themselves, the data obtained may be tainted and any decisions based on the information may cause more harm than good. Strange as it may seem,

the best time to assess a district's effectiveness is when it believes it is doing a good job. People are always more open to change when they think they are building on strengths instead of correcting weaknesses. But even under less positive conditions, the audit must be conducted in a manner that seeks to identify and solve problems rather than find scapegoats.

Structure and Contents of Guidebook

In Section II, you will find a distillation of the findings of the research on school effectiveness along with a discussion of how district practices influence a school's ability to promote student achievement. Section III presents the areas covered in the audit and suggests standards for assessing district effectiveness. At that point, the guidebook becomes a how-to manual. Sections IV and V describe a step-by-step approach to conducting the audit. They explain how to get started with the audit, who should be informed, who should be involved, and what to include in a plan of action. They go on to describe how to obtain information from interviews and questionnaires, and how to use the instruments contained in Section VIII. Included in Section VI are procedures for analyzing and interpreting information and recommendations for preparing and disseminating the report. Section VII makes suggestions for planning district improvement.

Section VIII consists of instruments to be used in the audit process—the interview guide and the questionnaire—while the final section, Section IX, contains the forms to be used in analyzing the audit information and preparing the report. Appendix A is a bibliography of research on school and organizational effectiveness and school improvement.

II.
RESEARCH SUMMARY

Research has demonstrated that some schools provide more effective instruction to their students than other schools serving similar populations. This research, based largely on studies of elementary schools, has spawned both new theory in education and a movement seeking school improvement and greater equity in educational attainment. The most popular statement of this research, the so-called Five Factor Theory, identifies strong building leadership, clear goals, an orderly school climate, high expectations and standards, and frequent monitoring and assessment of student progress as the essential characteristics of effective schools (Edmonds, 1979). Effective schools are described as being different from schools in general. They are more tightly managed. Their curriculum, instructional practices, and tests are more carefully aligned, and their work is directed toward agreed-upon goals. Such schools, researchers contend, are able to reduce the effects of socio-economic background on academic achievement. They are "strong" schools that have policies and practices which reduce the influence of social environment and peer culture on student behavior and academic performance. Consequently, they are able to make greater demands on their students. Studies of these schools suggest that the processes of schooling and the social environment of schools account for a significant portion of the variation in achievement among schools. Comprehensive reviews of this research have been conducted by Purkey and Smith (1983), MacKenzie (1983), Rutter (1983), and Corcoran and Hansen (1983).

The research on effective schools has been criticized for methodological weaknesses (MacKenzie, 1983; Rowan, Bossert, and Dwyer, 1983). It is important to remember that most of the studies have focused on urban elementary schools serving low-income children, and that the "findings" are merely correlations between school characteristics and student performance on basic skills tests. Yet, dozens of independent studies have produced similar findings. These findings are consistent with results of studies of effective teaching. There are also striking parallels between these findings and analyses of conditions in highly successful businesses (Clark, Lotto, and Astuto, 1984). Moreover, much of the research on implementation, school improvement, and workplace reform has reached conclusions similar to those drawn from the school effectiveness studies. Finally, the findings make common sense to practitioners, who accept them (Corcoran, 1985). In sum, there are powerful and persuasive arguments for using the research on effective schools and classrooms

as the basis for assessing schools and school districts and for designing school improvement programs.

For the purposes of this discussion, the synthesis prepared by Steward C. Purkey and Marshall S. Smith (1983) will be used as the "state of the art" summary of knowledge about effective schools. Purkey and Smith are critical of the studies but, at the same time, optimistic about their utility in school improvement programs. Their summary is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1:
Dimensions of Effective Schooling*

Organizational Structure Variables

1. School-site management. "...the leadership and staff of the school need considerable autonomy in determining the exact means by which they address the problem of increasing academic performance."
2. Instructional leadership. "...leadership is necessary to initiate and maintain the improvement process."
3. Staff stability. In a successful school, further success is promoted if the staff remains together.
4. Curriculum articulation and organization. "...a planned, purposeful program of courses seems to be academically more beneficial than an approach that offers many electives and few requirements."
5. Schoolwide staff development. "...staff development should be schoolwide rather than specific to individual teachers and should be closely related to the instructional program..." Long-term support and reinforcement are required.
6. Parental involvement and support. "...parents need to be informed of school goals and student responsibilities, especially with regard to homework."
7. Schoolwide recognition of academic success. When schools publicly honor academic achievement, students are encouraged to adopt similar norms and values.
8. Maximized learning time. Schools emphasizing academics devote a greater portion of the day to academics, with more active learning and fewer interruptions.
9. District support. Few significant changes can be realized without district support. Guiding and helping is probably the best role for the district office.

Process Variables

1. Collaborative planning and collegial relationships. "...change attempts are more successful when teachers and administrators work together." Collegiality breaks down barriers, encourages sharing, and promotes unity and commonality among the staff.
2. Sense of community. The feeling of being a part of a supportive community contributes to reduced alienation and increased achievement. Schools can create a sense of community through use of ceremony, symbols, and rules.
3. Clear goals and high expectations. Schools need to focus on goals they deem most important and continually monitor pupil and classroom progress toward those goals. High expectations for work and achievement also characterize successful schools.
4. Order and discipline. An environment which is quiet, safe, and non-distracting promotes learning. "...clear, reasonable rules, fairly and consistently enforced, ...reduce behavior problems...and promote pride and responsibility in the school community."

**Adapted from Purkey, S., and Smith, M. S., 1983. Effective Schools: A Review. The Elementary School Journal 83 (4), 1983, 427-452.*

Implications for District Policy and Practice

Research on the characteristics of effective teaching and effective schools is considerably more extensive than studies of school board performance and school district operations. Yet, leadership and support from local educational leaders and central office personnel are crucial to stimulating and sustaining school and classroom improvement. This conclusion comes from studies of school improvement (Berman, 1984; Crandall, Loucks, & Eisenman, 1983; Louis, Rosenblum, & Molitor, 1981) and from experience in working with schools. It is also drawn from a review of programs based on the effective schools research, most of which have been initiated by school district staff (Miles and Kaufman, 1985). Yet school effectiveness "theory" gives little consideration to the role of school districts. Many authors define the school as the unit of change and advocate a "grass-roots" school-by-school approach to improvement. This view is a logical derivative of the conclusion that school culture, which varies from school to school, is the dominant factor in determining effectiveness. School autonomy has been assumed in the research designs and then often championed in the conclusions. Districts are expected to play supportive roles, but the real action (and initiative) in the view of these authors and advocates rests, as it should, at the school level (Marsh and Berman, 1984).

This perspective is simply out of touch with the realities of school governance and operations. The school may be the proper unit of analysis for change, but schools are not independent of school systems. Schools function within a nested hierarchy of federal, state, and local policy. Operations of the local district, in particular, have a profound influence on school effectiveness and the possibilities for improvement. Furthermore, during the past three decades there has been a steady drift of authority from the school to the district as a result of collective bargaining and federal and state regulations (Talbert, 1981). It is probably more valid to think of schools as co-managed by district and building administrators, in spite of the fact that the balance of power and authority in this partnership varies enormously from district to district (Cuban, 1984; Yin, Blank, & White, 1984). The issue of school autonomy versus district control or initiative cannot be resolved in the abstract. It depends upon the local context and how local policy makers view the desired mix of central control and delegation.

Even in situations in which some form of school-site management prevails, districts may exercise enormous influence on school and classroom effectiveness:

- by determining the composition of the student body;
- by defining the criteria for student success or failure with promotion standards, attendance requirements, and local graduation requirements;
- by determining the quantity, quality, and fit of instructional materials;
- through patterns of resource and time allocations;
- by the degree of decentralization of decision making—districts vary in the amount of authority they give to principals and the degree of latitude given teachers with curriculum;
- through staff selection and assignments;
- by setting the tone for the organization and shaping the expectations and work norms of their staffs; and
- through collective bargaining and contract enforcement (Corcoran, 1985).

District policies and procedures also have been shown to have significant effects on the development and success of school improvement programs. For example:

- districts are typically the initiators of broad-based improvement efforts;
- districts often determine which schools participate. For example, David and Peterson (1984) found that while the policy of the California School Improvement Program called for schools to volunteer, in practice districts selected the volunteers;
- districts may determine the implementation strategy—whether it be top-down, bottom-up, or a combination of the two (Berman and McLaughlin, 1979; Smith and Purkey, 1985);
- the attitudes of district leadership may influence school staffs' view of an improvement effort as a fundamental change, a project, a source of funds, or more paperwork (Marsh & Berman, 1984; David & Peterson, 1984). Commitment on the part of leadership is critical to successful change (Fullan, 1982; Cuban, 1984);
- districts provide resources. Almost all improvement programs involve costs, especially staff time, that require district approval (Cuban, 1984, Rowan, 1983);
- districts are in the best position to provide schools with assistance because district staff are most familiar with individual schools and are able to spend time working there (Crandall, Loucks and Eisenman, 1983). The districts are more likely to have a pool of people to play this role (David & Peterson, 1984);
- districts can often provide important incentives and recognition for staff efforts and accomplishments (Smith and Purkey, 1985); and
- districts may be able to provide relief from policies, routines, or contractual provisos that limit or obstruct improvement efforts (Smith and Purkey, 1985).

Even this brief review makes clear that district leadership—the board of education, the superintendent, and the central office staff—plays a critical role in shaping the outcomes of school improvement initiatives. They are in the best position to initiate action (or to obstruct it); they have the opportunity to plan and coordinate; they control critical resources; and, ultimately, they decide whether the effort was a success or failure and if it should be expanded, continued, or put on the shelf with other well-intended plans.

Applications of the School Effectiveness Research

Districts all over the country have designed or adopted "effective schools" programs. Typically, these programs are intended to raise test scores and include elements such as:

- definition of instructional goals;
- new promotion and/or graduation requirements;
- changes in time allocations for instruction;
- mandated planning for each school;
- alignment of the curriculum taught and texts and materials with the tests being administered;
- revision of supervisory practices to align them with district goals;

- creation of a district assessment program to monitor student progress; and
- staff development focusing on effective schools and teaching, supervision, assessment, and planning (Cuban, 1984).

The general intent of these programs is increased control over instruction and tighter coupling between the classroom and the district. This search for tighter coupling often results in improvement programs being designed by district staff and implemented in a top-down fashion. As one observer notes:

> *From images popular in the academic journals of schools as loosely linked, amorphous enterprises with plenty of slack, a counter image now emerges from such districts of organizations tightly coupled in both goals and formal structure, targeted sharply on academic productivity. District officials pursuing policies that fasten individual schools snugly to the central office believe they have found just the right hammer to pound in a nail (Cuban, p. 134).*

Considering the pressure on district leaders to raise test scores, such policies are understandable, particularly if they produce quick gains in achievement. But these gains may be short-lived and the unanticipated consequences costly. The top-down, tighter-coupling approach to effective schools may lead to increased bureaucratization and simply a higher level of mediocrity. Increased uniformity combined with stricter control may lower the morale, level of effort, and professionalism of the teaching staff. Dependency on basic skills tests may narrow the curriculum and reduce time devoted to other important content. Stronger accountability measures without compensating discretion and participation may increase conflict between teachers and administrators and lead to a "work to rule" attitude. The press toward efficiency is not necessarily bad, it may even be essential, but it is unlikely to be sufficient for creating conditions for long-term improvement in school effectiveness.

Most analysts interpret the effective schools literature differently from the popular version described above. The central message, they would contend, is that good schools have a culture that promotes and supports goal consensus, cooperation, achievement orientation, problem solving, and high discretionary effort. In this view, people and the resources people bring to their jobs are a good school's major assets. Good schools and good managers create conditions under which people perform at their best.

In this view the role of the district is to encourage, nurture, and develop the desired work cultures in schools. This suggests an inversion of the conventional approach to implementation of improvements. Emphasis is placed on maximizing school level responsibility rather than gaining greater central control. School staff are asked to identify and clarify problems, develop and implement plans, make decisions about assignment of resources, and plan staff development activities.

The district's role is to provide direction and resources, including moral support, incentives for participation, time, funds, and technical assistance. The district also sets the parameters within which school-based improvement occurs by setting overall goals, defining indicators of quality, reviewing plans, and monitoring implementation. District leaders are ultimately responsible for the outcomes and cannot abdicate that responsibility. They are the ones who have both the authority and the responsibility to create the school conditions under which optimal effectiveness is attained. The issue is how to best create those conditions.

What Should Districts Do?

Faced with such conflicting advice about how to improve schools, what should district leaders do? In the face of public demands for better student performance, choosing not to act at all no longer remains an option. The answer to the dilemma depends in part on local context and on the district and community. Beyond that, the research provides some guidelines for action. A review of the research suggests that there are nine key functions districts must perform if school improvement is to have any chance of success:

1. District leaders must determine what decisions and functions belong to central administration and what decisions and tasks can be properly carried out at the building level. This is what Peters and Waterman (1983), in their bestseller on successful corporations, refer to as simultaneous loose-tight properties. District leaders must determine what values are so important that they must be tightly monitored and controlled and which can be delegated or left to discretion at the building level.
2. District leaders must set and communicate clear goals. They must ask what the system is about and what it should be about. Goals should be stated in a manner that permits verification of attainment.
3. District leaders must address the question of what should be taught and set up a process for making such decisions. Whether curriculum is defined centrally, in each school, or (in some cases) in the classroom, there must be a process to validate those decisions and ensure that they are actually put into practice.
4. District leaders should define the indicators used to assess school quality and change. Developing and managing this information system is probably a central office function. Information should include outcome data and indicators of those school conditions believed to be related to high performance.
5. District leaders should develop policies that encourage staff to identify and solve problems, work cooperatively, and make the maximum effort to achieve goals.
6. The district must develop policies and practices that foster a climate in which people can be productive, cooperative, and willing to face up to problems. Trust is essential if people are to accept responsibility for improvement.
7. District leaders should foster policies that provide incentives for initiative and improvement. They should emphasize that improvement is a collective responsibility and hold themselves and central office staff accountable for carrying out their responsibilities.
8. District leaders should ensure that the allocation of money, people, and time reflects district goals and priorities. The district must provide funds, technical assistance, and staff development to support improvements. They should also insure that their policies in selecting, assigning, and promoting staff are consistent with their goals.
9. Finally, the district must take a long-term view of improvement by setting reasonable timelines and providing for continuity of development.

These are the main messages that the research on school effectiveness and school improvement has for school districts. Although they raise questions to which there are often no definitive answers, they still must be addressed. That is the purpose of this audit.

III.
AUDIT AREAS AND STANDARDS

The *District Effectiveness Audit* is based on a set of standards for district policy and practice. These standards are grouped into seven areas: setting goals and standards, managing curriculum and program, assuring quality, allocating resources, creating a positive work environment, making improvements, and working with the community. Each area contains two to four standards and each standard is followed by a set of indicators that further define good policy and practice. The standards and indicators are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2
District Audit Standards

Setting Goals and Standards

1. The central mission of the school district is the provision of high quality instruction to all children.
   a. The district holds the same high academic standards for all its students.
   b. The provision of high quality instruction in the district is discussed at all board meetings.
2. The school district has defined a set of educational goals based on the district mission statement that are specific enough to permit assessment of progress.
   a. The district has defined measurable student outcomes related to its goals.
   b. The district has specific student promotion standards and requirements.
   c. The district's goals have been used to set individual school goals.

Managing Curriculum and Program

1. Decisions about the curriculum, including content, sequence, time allocations, and student access, are based on district goals.
   a. The district has clear curriculum guidelines that are used to define classroom instruction.
   b. The curriculum guides provide for sufficient flexibility (e.g., to meet unique student needs or to take advantage of unique staff skills and expertise).
   c. District policies ensure that student grouping for instruction meets the needs of all students.
   d. The district ensures that appropriate assistance is provided to students not meeting district academic and behavioral standards.

District Audit Standards *(continued)*

2. The district has policies to ensure that curriculum and instruction are coordinated.
   a. There is a clearly defined process for the adoption of curricula that is followed by the board and district staff.
   b. There is a clearly defined process for the selection of textbooks that is followed by the board and district staff.
   c. Curriculum and instruction are coordinated across grade levels and schools.
   d. The district has policies to ensure that all special programs are coordinated with the regular curriculum.
3. The district seeks to focus staff and student time on instruction and learning.
   a. Central office staff are expected to spend a majority of their time monitoring and improving curriculum and instruction.
   b. Principals are expected to spend at least half of their time on monitoring and improving curriculum and instruction.
   c. The district emphasizes minimizing interruptions in instructional time.
   d. The district encourages staff to work with students in activities outside the school day that are linked to the curriculum.

Assuring Quality

1. The district requires regular and frequent monitoring of student progress.
   a. The district requires frequent teacher assessment of student progress.
   b. District-wide assessment of student performance is conducted annually in an academic areas and at all grade levels.
   c. Tests used to assess progress are aligned with the curriculum.
   d. Student test results are provided to school staff in a timely and usable manner and are reviewed and discussed by staff.
2. The effectiveness of the curriculum is regularly evaluated.
   a. Thorough curriculum review, K-12, is conducted on a regular schedule.
   b. The district has implemented procedures to monitor curriculum implementation.
3. Supervision and staff evaluation are used as methods for improvement of instruction.
   a. Teaching staff evaluation is based on specific district-wide criteria.
   b. Supervisors are expected to provide feedback and assistance to teaching staff.

Allocating Resources

1. Fiscal resources are sufficient to support district goals, satisfy state and federal regulations, and foster growth and improvement.
   a. All district programs are adequately funded.
   b. At least 70% of the district's budget is spent on instruction.
   c. District resources are perceived as being fairly distributed across the district.
   d. Resources for curriculum development are adequate and coordinated district-wide.
2. The district's personnel policies are used to support school quality.
   a. All personnel openings are widely publicized.
   b. Personnel openings are filled only by the most qualified candidates.
   c. Principals are responsible for recommending appointments to school staffs.
   d. The district manages the salary scale to attract and retain the most effective instructional and administrative staff.

District Audit Standards *(continued)*

e. Central office staff are actively involved in the ongoing supervision and development of school staff.

3. District leaders allow school staffs as much discretion as possible in the allocation of fiscal and human resources within the framework of district priorities.
   a. Principals have flexibility in preparing and controlling their school budgets.
   b. Principals involve staff in the development and review of school budgets.

Creating a Positive Work Environment

1. The board and superintendent have agreed on the scope and direction of their mutual roles and responsibilities.
   a. The board and superintendent agree on their mutual roles and responsibilities.
   b. The board and superintendent are able to resolve administrative disagreements.
   c. The board holds the district superintendent accountable for implementing district programs and policies.
2. District policies promote success among the staff and students.
   a. In practices regarding class size, teacher assignments, and scheduling, district leaders give priority to teacher/student contact.
   b. The district has procedures for identifying and publicly recognizing high performance by staff.
   c. The district has procedures for identifying and publicly recognizing high performance by students.
3. District policies encourage and support staff input into district decision making and collegial relationships among staff.
   a. School staff participate in the development of district goals, programs and policies.
   b. District leaders encourage communication among school personnel by providing time for staff to get together professionally.
4. The district's schools and offices are pleasant places for students and staff.
   a. Schools and offices are clean and well-maintained.
   b. Schools and offices provide adequate work space for staff and students.
   c. Schools and offices are safe for both staff and students.

Making Improvements

1. District leadership demonstrates a commitment to improvement.
   a. District leaders express the theme of continuous improvement in district plans, activities, and publications.
   b. District leaders perceive the school as the unit of change and improvement.
   c. District leaders provide adequate timelines for school improvement.
   d. District leaders encourage staff to take calculated risks in school improvement efforts.
   e. District leaders stress research findings on effective school practices in their improvement efforts.
2. The district has a long-range improvement plan that defines specific targets for student outcomes.
   a. District leaders hold school staffs responsible for school improvement plans aimed at improving student achievement.
   b. District leaders give principals authority to modify instructional policies and practices to address particular school deficiencies.
   c. District leaders recognize the professional expertise of teachers and administrators.

District Audit Standards *(continued)*

3. Board of education policies and regulations enhance the capacity for change and provide for related development programs.
   a. Professional development activities are related to district and building improvement priorities.
   b. District leaders provide adequate incentives for participating in professional development.

Working with the Community

1. The district maintains frequent and open communication with the community.
   a. The district requires principals and teachers to be accessible and responsive to parents.
   b. Student test results in all areas of the curriculum are made known to the public.
   c. The district provides opportunities for parents to become involved in the education of their children.
   d. Parents and community are involved in the development and evaluation of district goals, programs and policies.
2. School facilities are available and used by the community.
   a. School facilities are widely used by the community during school and non-school hours.
3. The district makes effective use of external resources.
   a. The district has a plan for soliciting and using assistance from external agencies.

IV.
PLANNING THE AUDIT

This audit has been designed for districts of all sizes and types. It can be conducted as a self-study or used by an external consultant brought in by the district. Since each district is unique, the following suggestions are general in nature and may need to be interpreted somewhat differently by each district.

How to Get Started

Communication is the key to a successful audit. The more people who know that the audit is taking place, why it is being conducted, and how the information will be used, the greater the likelihood of obtaining meaningful results. Therefore, a vital piece of the implementation plan is deciding who to inform, when, and how.

The communication process should begin with the board of education. One reason for this is that the audit must be conducted under its auspices. Another is that the board must agree to look at its own actions as part of the process. Still, a third and even more important reason for communicating with the board at the beginning of the audit is that the board must commit itself to using the information that the audit generates. If the board's enthusiasm is only half-hearted, the audit will be an exercise in futility at best and could damage staff morale and/or reduce public support.

The board should be told why the audit is being proposed and how it will benefit the board and the district. It needs to know what the audit process entails and the role(s) board members will play in that process. The board must clearly understand that the audit is a tool for improvement planning, not a mechanism to "get" individuals, be they board members or staff. The board must also accept that the process requires time. The results will not appear overnight, nor will good data be generated, unless sufficient time is allocated by the staff and the board to data collection and analysis.

Another group critical to the audit's success is the district's administrative team. (The audit process assumes that school principals are considered part of this team along with central office administrators.) A large portion of the audit focuses on the practices of these administrators. They are also one of the primary sources of information for the audit.

Like boards of education, the administrative team must be fully informed of the reasons for conducting the audit, how the data will be collected, and how the results will be used.

It is reasonable for some members of the team to feel uneasy about their activities being placed in the spotlight. If that concern is intense or widespread and efforts to ameliorate their fears unsuccessful, it is probably not an appropriate time to conduct the audit.

Teachers and other staff members should also be made aware of the audit, but since their involvement in the process will be considerably less than that of the administrative team, their support is less critical. The same is true of the public. However, once the decision to conduct the audit is made, every effort should be made to alert the staff and the community to what will be happening and why.

Organizing the Team

The audit team is the central organizing unit even in situations where an external consultant has been retained. In fact, the recommendation to bring in a consultant may come from this team. The team is responsible for developing the audit plan, monitoring and reporting on the progress of the audit, presenting the final results, and, where no consultant is retained, gathering and analyzing the information.

The size of the team depends on the size of the district and the difficulty of collecting valid information. In a very small district, the team could consist of one central office administrator and one board member. A larger district might consider adding another administrator or two and representatives of the staff and community. A very large district could form a steering committee of 5 to 10 people and seek additional assistance from district staff.

If the team is going to collect data itself, it is vital that team members be skilled at interviewing. Even though the audit interview is semi-structured with prepared questions and scoring keys, interviewers will often need to ask follow-up questions in order to get full information. Knowing how to probe for the right information is important. Interviewers also will take notes that illustrate district policies and practices. These notes will be a valuable resource in preparing the audit report. The ability to code what is actually said and not the interviewer's interpretation is also critical. Because of this, it is probably best to avoid putting anyone with a particular ax to grind on the team.

Bringing in a Consultant

The chances of getting accurate information increase with the use of a skilled external consultant. People generally feel free to speak more candidly to someone who has no personal stake in what is said and who they think will maintain their confidentiality. Even where high trust exists, frankness is easier with someone who is not a boss, subordinate, or colleague.

Also, just as with financial audits, it is useful to have the organization's practices examined by someone who is not afraid to point out deficiencies wherever they are found. Someone from outside the district can present information without any need for defensiveness.

Another reason for bringing in a consultant is time. With the right consultant, the audit will probably be completed more rapidly because this person will have the skills to efficiently complete the interviews and analyze and interpret the data. While some board members and staff may have the same skills, asking them to add audit responsibilities to their already crowded schedules is bound to cause a delay somewhere along the line.

The benefits of having a consultant conduct the audit, however, depend upon the district's ability to find someone who is qualified at a price it can afford. One suggestion is to contact your state school boards association. That organization often can provide quality assistance at little or no cost.

Establishing the Audit Plan

Once the audit team is organized, its first task is to develop an implementation plan. The plan will include a list of tasks to be performed, who will perform them, and the timelines within which they will be accomplished. The plan should answer to following questions:

1. How will staff be informed about the project?
2. How will the community be informed? Are there segments of the community that need more information than others? Who are the informal key communicators in the community and how will they be reached?
3. Who will conduct the interviews? Is a consultant needed? Do district staff need preparation to conduct the audit?
4. Who will be interviewed to get the necessary information? How many people will be interviewed in order to obtain a valid cross-section of opinion? (The larger the district, the larger the sample required.)
5. How will the questionnaire be administered and to whom will it go? Will it be administered to all staff or to a sample? How will the sample be identified?
6. Who will aggregate and analyze the data? Will a computer tabulation of the questionnaire be used? (The answer will depend upon the number of responses anticipated.)
7. Who will write the report? Team members should be in agreement on the report and any conclusions it presents. How will this be achieved? For instance, will the team meet to discuss the information before the report is written? Will the report be circulated in draft form to team members?
8. How will the report be presented to the board of education, to the administrative team, to the staff, and to the public?
9. What is the schedule for beginning and completing each activity? (Each interview will take about an hour and a half. The questionnaire will take 30 minutes to complete.)
10. How and to whom will progress be reported?

When the answers to these and related questions have been formulated, the audit plan should be reviewed by the superintendent and the board of education. Then the implementation process begins.

V.
CONDUCTING THE AUDIT

Two parallel forms are used to collect information for the audit — an interview guide and a questionnaire. Both forms collect detailed information on the district's performance in terms of the standards set forth in Section III.

Conducting the Interviews

The interviews are the primary means for obtaining audit information. The people most appropriate for interviewing are board members and central office and school administrators. Some districts may include teaching staff in the group to be interviewed; others may, because of their size, interview only a sample of administrators and board members. In the latter case, caution should be exercised to ensure the sample is both large and broad enough to ensure accurate data.

Each interview takes approximately one and a half hours to complete. An interview guide containing 67 items is included in Section VIII. Each item consists of an open-ended question and a continuum of five descriptors. Each question, read verbatim by the interviewer, asks the respondent to describe district goals, policies, or practices in terms of the audit standards. After carefully listening to the respondent's answer, the interviewer categorizes the response on the continuum of descriptors. Clarifying or follow-up questions may be necessary to categorize the response. The five descriptors represent the range of responses from worst to best practice, with typical district practice at the midpoint. Important details or examples reported by the respondent are also recorded on the interview form for later reference.

In order to collect information that is as complete and accurate as possible, each interview should be carefully planned and skillfully conducted. Here are some tips that might be helpful.

In setting up the interview, be sure the interviewee is aware of the time commitment involved. Also, be sure the person is familiar with the audit's purpose and procedures and understands the roles you (the interviewer) and he or she are to play in the process. Arrange, insofar as possible, to hold the interview in a comfortable place (preferably in the building where the person works) where you will not be interrupted and where you can enjoy a reasonable degree of privacy.

The most successful interviews will be those where a climate of informality, trust, and

openness has been established. One way to achieve this is to start the interview with a quick review of the reasons for the interview and the kinds of questions you will be asking. Stress the confidential nature of the interview and explain how the data are to be handled. Explain that you will be asking for illustrations of key points and that the notes you will be taking may be used in the audit report. Assure the person that it is understood that he or she may not be able to answer all the questions and that an "I don't know" is quite acceptable. It is also important to stress that the focus of the audit is on the district and not individual schools and that the interviewee should try to respond to the questions in terms of the district as a whole. The cover sheet for the interview guide contains a statement covering some of these points. You might want to read it aloud.

As you conduct the interview, be aware that your body language and eye contact will influence the course of the interview as much as the questions you ask. If you sit leaning slightly forward and shift your gaze back and forth between the speaker and your notes, you will be conveying a sense of attentiveness and interest in the speaker. Allowing the speaker a few moments to reflect on the question you have asked before you interject anything further will also help create a comfortable climate.

There will be times when you will want to probe for further information, get some specifics, or clarify an idea. "Why?" is the question most frequently used but others, such as "Would you explain further?" or "Can you expand upon that?", work equally well. Sometimes it may become necessary to ask a very pointed question in order to be able to code an item. Try to frame these in terms of an example, like "When such and such a situation arises, does the central office and board respond by...?" Try to avoid asking questions that point to a "right" answer, however.

From time to time, try to crystallize what has been said by paraphrasing what you have heard. This is a good way to test whether you are correctly interpreting the content and tone of what has been said. It is also an effective method of refocusing the interview and moving on to the next question.

Conclude the interview by asking whether there are any areas of the district's operations that he or she feels have not been adequately addressed. If there are, note them on the interview form. Express gratitude for the time and thought he or she has put into the interview and take your leave. If necessary, rewrite your notes as soon as possible.

Administering the Questionnaire

The audit questionnaire contains 67 items that parallel the "best practice" descriptors from the interview questions. Respondents are asked to indicate on a five point scale the extent to which they believe the district follows each practice. The scale ranges from "Not at all" to "Completely". Approximately 30 minutes are needed to complete the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is designed to be an adjunct to the interviews and not a replacement for them. Like the interview questions, the items are difficult, if not impossible, to answer by someone who is not thoroughly familiar with the operations of the district. Therefore, the most likely people to be asked to fill them out are teaching staff and any administrators who cannot be interviewed.

If the audit team has decided to administer the questionnaire to all teaching staff, it is best to do so at school staff meetings. This will prevent discussion of the items in the faculty lounge and will aid in getting good data. If the district is large and the questionnaire is to be administered to only a sample of staff, bringing everyone together becomes more of a problem, but still should be attempted.

VI. ANALYZING THE AUDIT DATA AND PREPARING THE REPORT

Once the audit interviews and questionnaires have been completed, the responses must be aggregated, analyzed, and then organized into a report. This section describes step-by-step procedures for accomplishing all three tasks. Forms for completing these tasks are contained in Section IX. Read this section before you begin the analyses of the data.

Aggregating the Audit Information

All of the individual interview/questionnaire responses must first be transferred from the two sets of completed forms (interview and questionnaire) to the appropriate coding charts.

Step 1

Make two complete sets of the *District Effectiveness Audit Analysis Form,* one for the interview responses and one for the questionnaire responses. Although the interview and questionnaire responses are coded using the same analysis forms, coding must be done separately for each set of responses.

Step 2

Transfer all of the interview/questionnaire responses to the appropriate coding chart for each standard on the analysis forms. There is a separate coding chart for each standard. For each item, enter the responses to *Response Choice 1* under column 1 for that item, responses to *Response Choice 2* under column 2 for that item, and so on.

EXAMPLE 1. For item 1, the interview responses were the following:

Response Choice	Number of Responses
1	0
2	0
3	4
4	3
5	3

To complete the coding chart for item 1, the following entries should be made:

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
1	0	0	4	3	3		
Overall Standard							

Step 3

Once all of the responses for a single item have been coded, calculate the total number (N) of responses to that item. Enter the total under column N.

EXAMPLE 2. Using the same item responses for Example 1, the following entry should be made on the coding chart:

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
1	0	0	4	3	3	10	
2							
Overall Standard							

Step 4

After all of the interview/questionnaire responses have been entered on the coding chart, calculate the *Overall Standard* Totals for each of the *Response Choices* and *N*.

EXAMPLE 3. Expanding on the previous example, the following entries might be made on the coding chart where there are two items for the standard:

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
1	0	0	4	3	3	10	
2	0	1	4	3	2	10	
Overall Standard	0	1	8	6	5	20	

It should be emphasized that although the interview and questionnaire items are very similar, they should be aggregated and analyzed separately and only then compared.

Analyzing the Audit Information

Two sets of statistics (one for interview responses and one for questionnaire responses) must be computed for each of the 21 standards. First, *item means* are computed to determine the district's performance in terms of that particular item, as assessed by the group of interview or questionnaire respondents. Second, *standard means* are computed from all of the interview or questionnaire items within each standard in order to obtain a broader measure of the district's performance.[1]

If you have access to a computer that can compute simple descriptive statistics, the aggregation and analysis of responses will be fairly simple and quick. If you must complete these tasks by hand, instructions are provided below. As indicated earlier, forms for completing these tasks are contained in Section IX.

Item Means. Item means are calculated separately for the interview and questionnaire responses. In order to calculate each set of 67 item means, you will need: (1) the coding charts reporting the item response choices and N and (2) a blank mean chart. A sample blank mean chart is provided after each standard coding chart; you will have to make multiple copies to equal the total number of items for which you are computing item means.

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[1] *Some districts may want to examine the interview or questionnaire responses of not only the total group, but also sub-groups (e.g., board members, central office administrators, building by building staff). In these instances, item and scale means can be computed following the same procedures outlined in this section. However, each group's responses must be coded separately.*

Step 5

For each item transfer the Item *Response Choice* Totals for each of the five response choices from the coding chart to the *Item Total* column on the item mean chart.

EXAMPLE 4. Item Response Choice Totals are transferred from the coding chart to the Item Total column on the item mean chart:

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
1	0	0	4	3	3	10	
2	0	1	4	3	2	10	
Overall Standard	0	1	8	6	5	20	

Item Mean Chart—Item 1

Response Choice	Item Total	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1	0		1		
2	0		2		
3	4		3		
4	3		4		
5	3		5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Step 6

Multiply the *Item Totals* by the *Response Factors* and enter the five Products in the *Product* column.

EXAMPLE 5. Item Totals are multiplied by the Response Factors and entered in the Product column.

Item Mean Chart—Item 1

Response Choice	Item Total	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1	0		1		0
2	0		2		0
3	4		3		12
4	3		4		12
5	3		5		15

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Step 9

Transfer the overall Standard *Response Choice* Totals from the coding chart to the *Standard Total* column on the standard mean chart.

EXAMPLE 7. Standard Response Choice Totals are transferred from the coding chart to the Standard Total column on the standard mean chart:

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
1	0	0	4	3	3	10	3.90
2	0	1	4	3	2	10	3.60
Overall Standard	0	1	8	6	5	20	

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Total ×	Response Factor =	Product
1	0	1	
2	1	2	
3	8	3	
4	6	4	
5	5	5	

$$\frac{\text{Product}}{\text{Total}} \div \frac{\text{Standard}}{\text{N}} = \frac{\text{Standard}}{\text{Mean}}$$

Step 7

To obtain the *Item Mean*, sum the five *Products* and divide by the *Item N* (from the coding chart).

EXAMPLE 6. The five Products are summed and divided by the Item N to obtain the Item Mean.

Item Mean Chart—Item 1

Response Choice	Item Total	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1	0		1		0
2	0		2		0
3	4		3		12
4	3		4		12
5	3		5		15

$$\frac{39}{\text{Product Total}} \div \frac{10}{\text{Item N}} = \frac{3.90}{\text{Item Mean}}$$

Step 8

The *Item Means* should be entered in the far right column on the appropriate coding chart once calculated.

Standard Means. As with item means, standard means are calculated separately for the interview and questionnaire responses. In order to calculate each set of 21 standard means, you will need: (1) the coding charts reporting the standard total response choices and N and (2) a blank scale mean chart. The essential steps for calculating standard means are the same as for item means.

Step 10

Multiply the *Standard Totals* by the *Response Factors* and enter the five Products in the *Product* column.

EXAMPLE 8. Standard Totals are multiplied by the Response Factors and entered in the Product column:

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Total	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1	0		1		0
2	1		2		2
3	8		3		24
4	6		4		24
5	5		5		25

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

Step 11

To calculate the *Standard Mean*, sum the five *Products* and divide by the *Standard N* (from the coding chart).

EXAMPLE 9. The five Products are summed and divided by the Standard N to obtain the Standard Mean.

Scale Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Total	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1	0		1		0
2	1		2		2
3	8		3		24
4	6		4		24
5	5		5		25

$$\frac{75}{\text{Product Total}} \div \frac{20}{\text{Standard N}} = \frac{3.75}{\text{Scale Mean}}$$

Step 12

The *Standard Mean* should be entered in the far right column on the appropriate coding chart once calculated.

Charting the Audit Item and Standard Means

Once all of the item and standard means are calculated, they should be transcribed onto the *District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet*. This form simply lists each item and standard and then provides space to enter the interview and questionnaire means. An example of a partially completed summary form is provided below. A blank copy of the form is contained in Section IX.

EXAMPLE 10. A partially completed District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet is presented below:

District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet

	Interview Mean	Questionnaire Mean
Setting Goals and Standards		
1. The central mission of the district is the provision of high quality instruction to all children.	3.75	3.60
a. The district expects all students to achieve the same high standards. (Item 1)	3.90	3.70
b. District leaders frequently discuss the provision of high quality instruction. (Item 2)	3.60	3.50
2. The school district has defined a set of educational goals based on the district mission statement that are specific enough to permit assessment of progress.	4.57	4.63
a. The district has defined measurable student outcomes related to its goals. (Item 3)	4.90	4.85
b. The district has specific student promotion standards and requirements. (Item 4)	4.80	4.85
c. The district goals have been used to set individual school goals. (Item 5)	4.00	4.20

This form will be especially useful in reviewing the audit results and preparing the report.

In addition to transcribing the interview and questionnaire means to the summary sheet, two bar graphs should be prepared for each of the seven audit areas. The bar graphs visually present for each area the number of standards that were met (i.e., standard mean is equal to or greater than 4.00), the number of standards that were not met (i.e., standard mean is equal to or less than 2.00), and the number of standards in which the district matched conventional practice (i.e., standard mean ranges from 2.01 to 3.99). Bar graphs should be prepared for the interview and questionnaire responses separately.

Bar Graphs. In order to prepare the seven sets of bar graphs, you will need the completed *District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet* and 14 blank bar graphs. (Section IX contains two blank bar graphs which may be photocopied.)

Step 13

From the *District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet*, determine the number of interview and questionnaire standard means for each area that were:

- equal to or greater than 4.00
- ranged from 2.01 to 3.99
- equal to or less than 2.00

Example 11. Using the summary sheet from Example 10, the number of interview and questionnaire standard means that meet the three criteria are as follows:

Criteria	Interview	Questionnaire
Equal to or greater than 4.00	1	1
Ranged from 2.01 to 3.99	1	1
Equal to or less than 2.00	0	0

Step 14

Complete two bar graphs for each of the seven audit areas, marking the number of interview and questionnaire standard means that meet each of the three criteria. You will have to make seven photocopies of the blank bar graphs in Section IX.

EXAMPLE 12. Bar graphs are prepared for the *Setting Goals and Standards* audit data presented in Examples 10 and 11.

You have now completed all of the necessary aggregation and analysis steps and are ready to move onto interpreting the audit data and preparing the report.

Interpreting the Audit Results

In order to make sense of the audit data, it is best to examine the two sets of statistics from several perspectives. The following questions may help to organize your examination. You will want to refer to the coding charts, the *District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet,* and bar graphs in answering these questions.

- **How similar are the interview and questionnaire standard means?**

In order to answer this question, refer to the *District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet.* Item or standard means that are more than one point apart are most likely significantly different.[2] Item and standard means should be somewhat similar. If not, you may want to recheck the scoring of the two forms to be sure no mistakes were made or ask some of the respondents to confirm or disconfirm your findings. If significant differences persist, this may point to important areas of disagreement and/or conflict among groups within the district or to poor communications and misunderstandings among groups.

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[2] *A good rule of thumb for determining the significance of differences between means is to use a one standard deviation difference. In the pilot sites, the standard deviations generally fluctuated around one point.*

- **How well did the district perform on the 21 sets of standards?**

The *District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet* and bar graphs will help you address this question. On both the audit interview and questionnaire, a score of "5" is interpreted as best practice, "3" reflects conventional practice, and "1" is indicative of poor practice. Thus, mean scores closer to "5" indicate effective performance by the district while mean scores closer to "1" suggest improvement is needed. Districts should strive to score between "4" and "5".

- **Do the item means within each standard point to particular strengths or weaknesses of the district in terms of the individual standard or audit area?**

Again, the *District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet* will be most useful. In some cases, the district's performance on the individual items (or indicators) making up a particular standard may not be consistent. Individual item means should thus be examined to identify particular strengths or weaknesses.

- **How consistent are the individuals' responses to each interview or questionnaire item?**

The coding chart response patterns for each item should be examined to check for polarized ratings. Items with highly polarized response patterns (many low, many high responses) indicate significant differences in respondents' experiences or understandings in terms of that item.

- **Do the interview notes provide other clues to interpreting the audit results?**

Although not statistically analyzed, you should review the interviewer notes. These notes contain additional descriptions and examples that may provide some helpful clues in interpreting and understanding quantitive interview and questionnaire responses. Needless to say, respondents' perceptions of the district result, at least partially, from their experiences and interactions with others in the district. Their responses thus should be interpreted in light of the other findings.

Preparing and Disseminating the Report

After all of the data have been analyzed and interpreted, a report must be prepared summarizing the audit's findings. The report should be as brief and concise as possible. Before presenting the results, it is usually wise to describe events leading up to the audit, the purpose of the audit in your district, the composition of the audit team, and the procedures used by the audit team to collect and analyze the data. Once the stage has been set, the results can be presented for each of the seven audit areas.

In preparing the report, it is important to keep the limitations of the audit process clearly in mind. First, the audit data represent the perceptions of individuals within the school system about its performance rather than verified facts. Although accurately analyzed and reported, these perceptions may be inconsistent with the facts in some cases. Therefore, a disturbingly low score on an item or a standard for a particular group or a building staff may represent a problem of communication or a organizational conflict rather than an issue of poor practice. Thus interpretation of the audit results and preparation of the report require careful attention to possible discrepancies between perception and reality.

Secondly, while the standards reflect a working consensus about good practice and are consistent with research findings, they may not fit each district perfectly. There may

be sound and necessary reasons in individual districts for deviations from the "best" practice as defined in the audit. The audit should force these arguments to be made explicit and to be re-examined, which is its purpose.

And finally, the simple statistics used in the audit are merely heuristics to direct attention to issues needing discussion or further investigation and to areas of apparent disagreement or conflict. It is important not to make too much of them, particularly of small differences (less than half of a point difference in item or scale means) among groups or school staffs.

The results should be reported accurately and objectively. The recommended means of analyzing and presenting the data have been described in the previous section. The interview and questionaire results should be summarized in bar graphs that display for each of the seven areas of the audit the standards met or not met and the extent of conventional practice. Brief narrative summaries should accompany these charts to explain and amplify the results. The *District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet* should be appended to the report. However, the scale means for each standard should be presented in the body of the report along with overall judgments for each of the twenty-one standards. Item means from either the interviews or the survey may be presented in the body of the report to illustrate significant strengths (mean scores at or above 4.0) or weaknesses (mean scores at or below 2.0) or areas of significant difference in perception among groups (differences in mean scores greater than 1.0). Examples or descriptions from the interviews also may be used to illustrate particular points.

The format for the report should incorporate the following sections:

- an executive summary highlighting the findings for the seven audit areas and identifying areas of significant strength and areas requiring discussion;
- a brief review of the purpose of the audit and how it was conducted (who, when, how, how many);
- separate sections on the seven areas of the audit, each one including:
  - a bar graph and brief narrative that summarize the results;
  - listing of each standard in the area followed by a discussion of the results for that standard, including the mean scale scores for the interviews and the questionaire and an overall judgment about the district's performance against the standard. Attention also should be given to any significant item scores and any group differences in perceptions.
  - identification of any other issues raised by a significant number of those interviewed.
- several appendices presenting the *District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet,* any disaggregation of data by group or school building, and lists of those interviewed and members of the audit team.

In writing the report, it is important to strive for consensus among audit team members. Because the report represents the team's work, the group as a whole must be able to stand behind it. After the report is completed, it should be presented in draft to the superintendent, board president, and other key individuals for review of its accuracy and comprehensiveness. Then after any necessary revisions, it should be presented to the superintendent, board members, and other central office and building administrators. It is usually wise to stagger the distribution of the report in the order suggested above. This allows key officials an opportunity to review and react to the report without undue constraints and pressure. It is also recommended that reports not be distributed in isolation; team members should plan to debrief the particular audience as the report is distributed. Once the

superintendent, board, and other administrators have reviewed and discussed the audit findings, the results can be released to the remainder of the district staff and public. Again, the audit team should schedule oral presentations to explain and interpret audit findings.

VII. USING THE AUDIT RESULTS

Technically, the audit is complete when the report is issued, but in reality the work is only beginning. The real value of the audit is in the use made of its information. If the district has a carefully crafted, ongoing improvement planning process already in place, audit results can be easily incorporated into the planning cycle and dealt with as a matter of course. In cases where procedures for planning have not been clearly established, the following suggestions may be helpful to a board looking for a way to approach audit results.

- Set aside time to deal specifically with the results of the audit. Don't underestimate the time required. The size of the district and the magnitude of the problems uncovered will have a bearing on the time that will have to be devoted. A board retreat, properly advertised to meet "sunshine" requirements, is one way of allocating time away from the usual press of business.
- Seek recommendations from district administrators. Many of the changes the board is likely to want will have to come through the efforts of the administrative team. Those efforts will be stronger if the administrators believe in the goals and have helped develop implementation strategies.
- Establish manageable goals and timelines. Not everything can or should be done at once. Consider other district needs as well as audit results when determining priorities, but don't ignore a problem just because it will take considerable time to resolve. Perhaps there are small steps that can be taken to move the district toward the desired improvements.
- Make sure all goals and plans are put in writing and that everyone knows what is expected of them. Where appropriate, incorporate the goals into the criteria by which the board evaluates its own effectiveness and the performance of its chief school administrator.
- Establish schedules for progress reviews. These may be yearly for long-term goals and quarterly or even monthly for shorter term plans. Once established, stick to the schedules. If the board demonstrates that the goals are important by monitoring their progress, they are more likely to be achieved.

Planning is a continuous cycle of identifying needs, establishing goals, setting priorities, generating alternative strategies, developing plans, implementing plans, monitoring progress, and evaluating results. The *District Effectiveness Audit* is a tool for identifying certain kinds of needs. It is up to the board and administrative team to turn needs into accomplishments.

VIII. AUDIT INSTRUMENTS

This section contains the audit interview guide and the audit questionnaire. They have been printed single-sided for ease in photocopying.

These materials may be copied for use by a school district in conducting an audit of its operations. They may not be reproduced for any other purpose.

DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS AUDIT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Directions: This interview is part of a comprehensive assessment of the district's educational programs and operations. The purpose of the interview is to gather your perceptions of the district. There are no right or wrong answers. Instead, your perceptions, based on your experiences in this district, are most important. It is therefore critical that you answer the interview questions as carefully and candidly as possible. Your responses will be kept confidential and reported only in aggregate form.

I will read each question exactly as it is written. I will be referring to district leaders in some of the questions. District leaders refer to both board members and central office administrative team (superintendent, assistant superintendent, etc.). The questions are designed to examine the district as a whole. In responding, you should try to generalize about the educational programs and operations of the district overall. I will record your answers as carefully and clearly as possible. If I do not understand your response, I will ask you to elaborate.

Do you have questions? If not, we will begin.

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SETTING GOALS AND STANDARDS

1. Does the district hold the same high academic standards for all its students?

1	2	3	4	5
The district has no clear academic standards.	The district has low expectations of all its students.	The district expects some students to achieve more than others, but standards are generally low.	The district expects some students to achieve more than others, but standards are generally high.	The district expects all its students to achieve the same high standards.

Notes:

2. How often does the board discuss issues concerning the quality of instruction?

1	2	3	4	5
The board rarely discusses these issues.	The board discusses these issues only on occasions required by state regulations.	The board discusses quality of instruction issues in response to particular problems or complaints.	Quality of instruction issues are regularly discussed at most meetings.	The board discusses quality of instruction issues at every meeting.

Notes:

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3. Are district goals specific enough to measure progress toward their achievement?

1	2	3	4	5
Measurable student outcomes have not been defined.	Measurable student outcomes have been defined for basic skills at some grade levels.	Measurable student outcomes have been defined for basic skills goals at all grade levels.	Measurable student outcomes have been defined for basic skills and some other academic areas.	Measurable student outcomes have been defined for all district goals.

Notes:

4. Have the district's goals been used to set individual school goals?

1	2	3	4	5
The district's goals are ignored when school goals are determined.	The district's goals are occasionally used in setting school goals.	The district's basic skills goals have been incorporated into individual school goals.	The district's basic skills goals and a few others are reflected in the goals of individual schools.	All the district's goals are reflected, as appropriate, in the goals of individual schools.

Notes:

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5. To what extent are district standards or requirements for student promotion consistently enforced?

1	2	3	4	5
The district has no specific promotion standards or requirements.	The district has established requirements, but they have little influence on practice and are not well understood.	The district has established requirements, but they are not implemented in all schools.	The district has established requirements and they are generally followed throughout the district. Exceptions are not uncommon.	District requirements are consistently followed throughout the district.

Notes:

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6. To what extent do specific district curriculum guidelines define classroom instruction?

1	2	3	4	5
Written curriculum guidelines do not exist.	Written curriculum guidelines exist in some areas, but are rarely consulted.	There are guidelines for most curriculum areas, but there is great variation in their use throughout the district.	District curriculum guidelines exist in most areas and influence classroom instruction in those areas.	District-wide guidelines set the parameters for all instructional activities.

Notes:

7. How much flexibility do teachers have in implementing the curriculum guides (i.e., to meet unique student needs or to take advantage of unique staff skills and expertise)?

1	2	3	4	5
There is little flexibility in the curriculum guides.	There is great variance across disciplines in the flexibility of district curriculum guides.	Some flexibility exists in all district curriculum guides, but not enough to meet students' needs or take advantage of staffs' skills or expertise.	Sufficient flexibility exists in the guides to meet the needs of some students and to take advantage of the skills of some staff.	Curriculum guides provide sufficient flexibility to meet all students' needs and take advantage of all staffs' skills or expertise.

Notes:

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8. Do district policies ensure that student grouping for instruction meets the needs of all students?

1	2	3	4	5
There are no district policies regarding student grouping.	Student assignments are made in the primary grades on the basis of basic skills tests and rarely change for the remainder of their school years.	Students are grouped for instruction in all subject areas according to their basic skills performance. Assignments occasionally change at the end of the school year.	Students are grouped for instruction in each subject area based on their academic needs. Assignments are changed as appropriate by the teaching staff.	Students are grouped for instruction in each subject area based on their academic and social needs. Assignments are not fixed and can be changed any time.

Notes:

9. Does the district provide appropriate assistance to students not meeting district academic standards?

1	2	3	4	5
There is no attention to this issue.	Attention is directed to this issue in response to grievances or complaints.	The district relies on teaching staff to ensure assistance is provided.	The district requires annual identification of such students.	The district requires such students be identified and actively tracks their progress.

Notes:

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10. Does the district ensure that appropriate assistance is provided to students not meeting district behavioral standards?

1	2	3	4	5
There is no attention to this issue.	Attention is directed to this issue in response to grievances or complaints.	The district relies on teaching staff to ensure assistance is provided.	The district requires annual identification of such students.	The district requires such students be identified and actively tracks their progress.

Notes:

11. How well followed by the board and district staff is the process for adopting curriculum?

1	2	3	4	5
There is no specific district process for adopting curriculum.	A district process for adopting curriculum exists, but it is largely pro forma and has no impact on decisions.	A clearly defined district process exists, but its use varies greatly across disciplines and schools.	A clearly defined district process exists and it is generally followed.	The district process for adopting curriculum is clearly defined, consistently followed, and its use is monitored.

Notes:

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12. How well followed by the board and district staff is the process for selecting textbooks?

1	2	3	4	5
There is no specific district process for selecting textbooks.	A district process for selecting textbooks exists, but it is largely pro forma and has no impact on on decisions.	A clearly defined district process exists, but its use varies greatly across disciplines and schools.	A clearly defined district process exists and it is generally followed.	The district process for selecting textbooks is clearly defined, consistently followed, and its use is monitored.

Notes:

13. How closely are curriculum and instruction coordinated across grade levels and among schools?

1	2	3	4	5
Curriculum and instruction are not coordinated across grade levels and schools.	Curriculum and instruction are coordinated for basic skills areas within schools. There is little formal alignment across schools.	Curriculum and instruction are aligned in most areas within schools. There is little formal alignment across the district.	Curriculum and instruction are aligned in most areas within schools. Only basic skills areas are aligned across the district.	Curriculum and instruction are aligned in all areas across grade levels and schools.

Notes:

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14. How effectively does the district ensure that special needs programs (e.g., handicapped, bilingual, compensatory) are coordinated with the regular curriculum?

1	2	3	4	5
There is little, if any, coordination between regular and special needs programs.	There is some communication between regular and special needs staff. Coordination and alignment between the two depend upon teacher willingness to cooperate.	Communications between regular and special needs staff occurs regularly. Coordination and alignment between the two depend on students and staff involved.	Communication between regular and special needs staff occurs regularly. Coordination is monitored by supervisory staff, but it is uneven.	Communication between regular and special needs staff is ongoing and is monitored. A high level of coordination exists between the two for most students and staff.

Notes:

15. How much time are central office staff expected to spend monitoring and improving curriculum and instruction?

1	2	3	4	5
0%	Less than 10%	11-25%	26-49%	50% or more

Notes:

16. How much time are principals expected to spend monitoring and improving curriculum and instruction?

1	2	3	4	5
0%	Less than 10%	11-25%	26-49%	50% or more

Notes:

17. Does the district attempt to minimize instructional interruptions?

1	2	3	4	5
There is no attention paid to minimizing interruptions during school day by either the central office or the schools.	Some schools have taken steps to minimize interruptions. There is no district level emphasis on doing so.	There is an informal district policy, but compliance varies by school.	There is a formal district-wide policy. Most schools adhere to it.	The district places heavy emphasis on minimizing interruptions and all schools follow suit.

Notes:

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18. How does the district encourage staff to work with students outside of the school day in curriculum-related activities?

1	2	3	4	5
The district does not support staff/student activities linked to the curriculum outside the school day.	The district encourages staff to participate in these activities, but provides no incentives.	The district supports staff participation. Monetary incentives are provided.	The district supports staff participation. Monetary incentives and release time are provided.	The district encourages and recognizes staff participation. Monetary incentives, release time and recognition are provided.

Notes:

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ASSURING QUALITY

19. Does the district require frequent teacher assessment of student progress?

1	2	3	4	5
No district requirements exist.	The district requests frequent teacher assessment. There are no clear guidelines or procedures.	The district expects frequent teacher assessment. Procedures are determined by each school.	District guidelines exist. Enforcement is different across schools.	District guidelines are enforced consistently across the district.

Notes:

20. In what areas is student academic performance assessed district-wide?

1	2	3	4	5
Student academic achievement is not assessed annually district-wide.	Student basic skills achievement is assessed annually in some grades. Other areas are assessed irregularly.	Student basic skills achievement is assessed annually in all grades. Other areas are assessed irregularly.	Student performance in all academic areas is annually assessed at some, but not all, grade levels.	District-wide assessment of student performance in all areas and at all grade levels is conducted annually.

Notes:

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21. How aligned with the district's curriculum are tests used to assess student progress?

1	2	3	4	5
Tests are not aligned with curriculum.	There is some overlap between the basic skills curriculum and district-wide tests.	There is a match between the basic skills curriculum and district-wide tests. Other academic skills areas are not tested or not aligned.	District-wide tests are aligned in most areas with the district's curriculum.	District-wide tests are well-aligned with the district's curriculum.

Notes:

22. Are school staff provided with school test results in a timely and usable manner?

1	2	3	4	5
School test results are not shared with school staff.	School test results are shared with staff at inappropriate times or in formats that prohibit analysis and discussion.	School test results are provided to school staff in a timely and and usable manner. There is no formal review or discussion of the results.	School test results are provided to school staff in a timely and usable manner. The degree of review or discussion about them varies from school to school.	School test results are provided to school staff in a timely and usable manner and are reviewed and discussed by staff.

Notes:

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23. How often do thorough curriculum reviews, K-12, occur?

1	2	3	4	5
There are no formal curriculum reviews.	Curriculum reviews occur when required by an external agency or internal pressure and are of uneven quality.	Curriculum reviews occur on a regular cycle, but are uneven in quality and often superficial.	Curriculum reviews are conducted as needed but, when done, are thorough.	Curriculum reviews occur on a regular cycle and are carefully done.

Notes:

24. Does the district monitor curriculum implementation?

1	2	3	4	5
The district does not have procedures to monitor classroom curriculum implementation.	The district has procedures, but they are either superficial or rarely used.	The district has procedures, but does not monitor their use.	District procedures exist, but monitoring of their use varies from school to school.	The district's procedures are consistently used.

Notes:

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25. Are there specific criteria for the evaluation of teaching staff?

1	2	3	4	5
No criteria exist.	Criteria used to evaluate performance vary from school to school.	District criteria exist, but they are vague and inconsistently used.	Clear district criteria exist. Their use varies.	District criteria are clearly defined and consistently used.

Notes:

26. Are supervisors expected to provide feedback and assistance to teaching staff?

1	2	3	4	5
Little or no feedback or assistance is provided.	The provision of feedback and assistance is left to the discretion of supervisors.	Feedback and assistance is expected by the district, but the amount provided varies from supervisor to supervisor.	The district has guidelines that are generally followed.	There is a district-wide program for ensuring assistance is provided.

Notes:

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27. Are sufficient funds available to meet all district goals?

1	2	3	4	5
No program is sufficiently funded.	Some mandated programs are adequately funded; most programs are not.	All mandated programs are adequately funded; others are not.	Academic programs are adequately funded; others are not.	All programs are adequately funded.

Notes:

28. What percent of the budget is spent on instruction?

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 45%	45-54%	55-60%	61-69%	70% or above

Notes:

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29. Is the distribution of resources across the district perceived as fair?

1	2	3	4	5
There are long-standing inequities in the distribution of resources.	Issues of inequity periodically arise.	While the distribution is generally seen as fair, most people believe special interest groups claim a greater share of resources.	Most see the distribution as fair. A few are unhappy with it.	All see the distribution as fair and appropriate.

Notes:

30. Does the district budget allocate adequate resources to conduct coordinated curriculum development on a regular basis?

1	2	3	4	5
There is no allocation for curriculum development.	The resources allocated are adequate to meet only the most pressing needs.	The resources provided are adequate, but there is no coordination of curriculum development.	The resources provided are adequate. There is district coordination in priority areas.	There are adequate resources allocated and there is coordination in all areas of curriculum development.

Notes:

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31. Does the district budget allocate resources to conduct staff development on a regular schedule?

1	2	3	4	5
There is no budget for staff development.	Resources are provided as needed for special programs.	Resources are provided for periodic events. There is not a regular budget line for staff development.	Resources are provided regularly for district-wide initiatives. There are few resources for school-based programs.	Resources are provided for ongoing programs at the district and school levels. These programs are linked to district/school improvement efforts.

Notes:

32. Are personnel openings publicized to provide an equal opportunity for all qualified candidates to apply?

1	2	3	4	5
All personnel openings are posted in a central location. There is no external advertisement.	All personnel openings are posted and announced in district flyers pro forma. There is no external advertisement.	All personnel openings are posted and advertised locally.	All personnel openings are posted internally and advertised on a local and regional basis.	All personnel openings are posted internally and advertised locally, regionally, and sometimes nationally. There is regular contact with schools of education.

Notes:

33. How does the district ensure that all personnel openings are filled by only the most qualified candidates?

1	2	3	4	5
No procedures exist for screening and ranking candidates.	Procedures exist; however, they are pro forma and have little impact on hiring decisions.	Procedures exist but their use varies.	All candidate qualifications are reviewed and candidates are ranked. The top rated candidates are not always offered positions first.	All candidate qualifications are reviewed and candidates are ranked. The top rated candidates are always offered positions first.

Notes:

34. Are principals responsible for recommending appointments to school staffs?

1	2	3	4	5
Principals are not involved in selecting school staffs.	Principals are involved in selecting staffs, but have little influence over decisions.	Principals may be consulted before final staffing assignments are made. Their wishes are sometimes considered.	The principal's wishes are generally considered.	The principal's recommendation is the one brought to the board for approval.

Notes:

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35. Does the district's salary scale attract and retain the highest quality teaching staff?

1	2	3	4	5
The district's salaries are very low, and so effective staff are not attracted/retained. The district is unable to recruit or retain staff in high demand areas.	The district's salaries are somewhat below average. Effective instructional staff are sometimes lost, especially in high demand areas.	The district's salaries are average and somewhat competitive in attracting/retaining staff, but there is difficulty in high demand areas.	The district's salaries are somewhat above average and very competitive in all areas.	The district's salaries are higher than average and the district usually has its pick of highly qualified staff.

Notes:

36. Does the district's scale attract and retain the highest quality administrative staff?

1	2	3	4	5
The district's salaries are very low, so effective staff are not attracted/retained. The district is unable to recruit or retain staff in high demand areas.	The district's salaries are somewhat below average. Effective instructional staff are sometimes lost, especially in high demand areas.	The district's salaries are average and somewhat competitive in attracting/retaining staff, but there is difficulty in high demand areas.	The district's salaries are somewhat above average and very competitive in all areas.	The district's salaries are higher than average and the district usually has its pick of highly qualified staff.

Notes:

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37. What is the role of central office staff in the supervision and development of school staff?

1	2	3	4	5
Central office staff have no role in the supervision and development of school staff.	Central office staff have no formal duties, but are sometimes asked to assist in specific supervision/development activities.	Central office staff have some responsibilities for supervision and development. Their involvement is generally superficial.	Central office staff are involved in the ongoing supervision and development of school staff. As there are insufficient resources to provide adequate services across all buildings, emphasis is placed on low-achieving schools.	Central office staff are actively involved in the ongoing supervision and development of school staff in all schools.

Notes:

38. How much flexibility do principals have in preparing and modifying school budgets?

1	2	3	4	5
Principals have no flexibility in preparing their school budgets. Budgets may not be modified once set.	Principals have some flexibility in preparing their budgets. Budgets may not be modified once set.	Principals have some flexibility in establishing their budgets and may make some changes to them once set.	Principals have great flexibility in preparing their budgets, but can only make minor modifications to them once set.	Principals have great flexibility in preparing and controlling their budgets.

Notes:

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39. Do principals involve staff in the development and review of school budgets?

1	2	3	4	5
School staffs are not involved in the development or review of school budgets.	Principals ask for suggestions on school needs. Staff are not otherwise involved in development of school budgets.	Principals sometimes distribute school budgets to staff for their review and feedback. Staff have little influence over final budgets.	Principals request staff input in preparing the budget. Staff are consulted about budget lines affecting their areas.	Principals ask staff to submit items to be included in the school budget. Staff have input in the development of the budget lines affecting their areas as well as the overall budget.

Notes:

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CREATING A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

40. How often do the board and the superintendent agree on mutual roles and responsibilities?

1	2	3	4	5
The two rarely agree on their mutual roles and responsibilities. They are constantly at odds.	The two agree on some of their mutual roles and responsibilities. Disagreements exist in some critical areas.	The two generally agree. Disagreements exist in some minor areas.	The two generally agree. Disagreements sometimes occur in terms of specific situations.	The two almost always agree on their mutual roles and responsibilities.

Notes:

41. To what extent are the board and the superintendent able to resolve administrative disagreements?

1	2	3	4	5
The board and the superintendent are constantly at odds on administrative issues. Their differences tend to fester over long periods of time.	The board and the superintendent frequently disagree on administrative issues. Many conflicts remain unresolved, but usually are put aside.	The board and the superintendent sometimes disagree on administrative issues. Compromises are sometimes reached after some discussion, but some conflicts remain unresolved.	The board and the superintendent sometimes disagree on administrative issues. Compromises are almost always reached and conflicts are resolved.	The board and the superintendent sometimes disagree on administrative issues. They generally are able to resolve their differences amiably in a short period of time.

Notes:

42. How does the board evaluate the district superintendent?

1	2	3	4	5
There is no formal system for superintendent accountability.	There is a system for superintendent accountability, but the criteria are vague and the evaluation is regarded as a formality.	There is a system for superintendent accountability. The evaluation is taken seriously but little emphasis is placed on school effectiveness.	There is a system for superintendent accountability that provides specific criteria for the evaluation of the superintendent's performance, including improvement in school effectiveness.	There is a system for superintendent accountability that provides for the establishment of annual targets, monitoring of the superintendent's performance, and a full accounting to the board.

Notes:

43. What priority does the board give to increasing teacher-student contact, i.e. class size, teacher assignments, scheduling, etc.?

1	2	3	4	5
The board does not address increased teacher-student contact.	This issue is addressed, but given low priority by the board.	This issue is given moderate priority by the board.	This issue is given high priority by the board.	This issue is given top priority by the board and changes in district practice have been made as a result.

Notes:

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44. Do district leaders encourage, recognize and reward staff initiative and dedication to excellence?

1	2	3	4	5
Staff initiative and dedication are generally ignored.	Staff initiative and dedication are encouraged and recognized only at the school level.	There is some district recognition, mostly in traditional ways.	Staff initiative and dedication are widely encouraged and recognized by the district through mostly traditional ways.	Staff initiative and dedication are widely encouraged, recognized and rewarded at the district levels through a variety of traditional and innovative ways.

Notes:

45. Does the district encourage and recognize outstanding student performance in all areas?

1	2	3	4	5
Outstanding student performance is usually ignored.	The district encourages recognition of outstanding student performance, but leaves the amount and form of recognition to the individual schools.	The district provides limited recognition for outstanding student performance, mostly in traditional areas.	The district provides a great deal of recognition in traditional areas.	The district provides a great deal of recognition for outstanding performance in <u>all</u> areas.

Notes:

46. What is the involvement of school staffs in the development and evaluation of district goals, programs and policies?

1	2	3	4	5
There is little staff input.	There is superficial staff input through informal surveys or staff meetings. Some staff serve on committees.	There is some formal input through surveys or meetings. Some staff play influential roles on committees.	There are standing committees that participate in the development or evaluation process.	All staff participate in the development or evaluation process.

Notes:

47. What opportunities are provided by district leaders for teachers to work together as professional colleagues?

1	2	3	4	5
Almost no time or opportunity is provided.	Occasional inservice time is provided.	Regular department and/or grade level meetings are held in addition to occasional inservice opportunities.	There is time set aside each day for teachers to work together in addition to formal meetings and inservice.	Teachers are organized into teams that work together each day and engage in group planning.

Notes:

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48. How clean and well-maintained are schools and offices?

1	2	3	4	5
District schools and offices are very poorly maintained and ill-equipped (i.e., poor heating, lighting, desks, etc.)	Schools and offices are often not clean and some are ill-equipped. Some repairs are needed.	Schools and offices are generally clean and adequately equipped. They are neither a positive nor negative influence in the district.	Schools and offices are clean, well-maintained, and well-equipped. They provide a pleasant physical environment.	Schools and offices are clean, attractive, well-maintained, pleasant, and a source of pride to the community. They provide a highly positive physical environment.

Notes:

49. How adequate is work space in schools and offices?

1	2	3	4	5
All schools suffer from inadequate work space which limits the instructional programs.	Some schools and offices have inadequate space.	Adequate space exists in most schools and offices. There is little room for new activities or flexible use of space.	More than adequate space exists in schools and offices, permitting some expansion of activities.	More than adequate space exists to meet staff and student needs. The space is flexible and permits variety in use and expansion of activities.

Notes:

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50. How safe are schools and offices for staff and students?

1	2	3	4	5
Schools and offices are not secure internally.	Some schools and offices are secure internally. None are secure externally.	All schools and offices are safe havens. Few are safe externally.	All schools and offices are safe havens. Most are safe externally.	District schools and offices are very secure. Safety is not a concern within the district.

Notes:

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MAKING IMPROVEMENTS

51. Do district leaders stress continuous improvement of the schools?

1	2	3	4	5
School improvement is seldom discussed or acted on by district leaders.	The need for school improvement is sometimes discussed, usually in response to public pressure or parental complaint. Action rarely occurs.	The need for school improvement is often discussed, but actions are taken only when conditions are extreme.	School improvement is a continuing theme in district plans, publications and activities.	School improvement is constantly stressed in all district plans, publications and activities.

Notes:

52. Do district leaders perceive the district or the school as the initiator of improvement efforts?

1	2	3	4	5
School improvement efforts are imposed from the central office. Individual school plans are unnecessary.	School improvement efforts are imposed from the central office. School plans are developed in response to district initiatives.	School improvement efforts are developed by the central office with school input. School plans are developed and some variation across schools is tolerated.	School improvement efforts can be developed by schools or by the district. If schools develop the plans, they must be approved by the central office.	School improvement efforts and plans are developed jointly by the central office and school.

Notes:

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53. Do district leaders provide adequate time for school improvement?

1	2	3	4	5
District leaders expect immediate implementation and quick results.	District leaders expect implementation and results in the same school year. Timelines are sometimes ignored or pushed up.	Timelines are planned for school improvement efforts, but are sometimes too short. Results are usually reviewed annually.	Reasonable timelines are established and results are reviewed over an agreed-upon time period.	Realistic timelines are negotiated by district leaders and program staff, and are adjusted depending on the effort's progress. Results are usually examined regularly over a pilot period.

Notes:

54. Do district leaders actively encourage and support staff to take calculated risks in school improvement efforts?

1	2	3	4	5
There are serious penalties for school improvement failures, regardless of extenuating circumstances. Staff are not willing to initiate innovative programs.	Sometimes penalties exist for those involved with major school improvement failures. Some staff are not willing to initiate programs.	There can be penalties, if individual responsibilities were not met. Some staff are willing to try new ideas.	There is individual accountability for school improvement efforts, but extenuating circumstances are usually taken into account. Staff are sometimes encouraged to try new ideas.	There is collective accountability for school improvement efforts. The district actively encourages and supports calculated risks. Good faith efforts are recognized and rewarded.

Notes:

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55. In their work with schools, how often do district leaders stress current findings on effective school practices (e.g., good schools should concentrate on providing effective instruction appropriate to student needs in an atmosphere which is safe, pleasant, and conducive to learning)?

1	2	3	4	5
District leaders are not familiar with the research literature.	District leaders are familiar with research literature, but do not stress findings in their ongoing work with schools.	District leaders are familiar with the research literature and often refer to it in their work with schools.	District leaders frequently incorporate research findings in their work with schools.	District leaders consistently stress and incorporate research findings in their work with schools.

Notes:

56. Do district leaders hold school staffs responsible for developing and implementing school improvement plans aimed at improving student achievement?

1	2	3	4	5
There are no school improvement plans.	Although school improvement plans are required, staff are not responsible for their quality or implementation.	Staff are responsible for school improvement plans. There is little district follow-up once plans are initially reviewed.	Staff are responsible for school improvement plans. There is some district follow-up to ensure implementation, especially in low-achieving schools.	Staff are responsible for school improvement plans. The district consistently monitors implementation across all schools.

Notes:

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57. What authority do district leaders give principals to modify district instructional policies and practices to address particular school deficiencies?

1	2	3	4	5
They may not be modified by principals.	They may be modified by principals only after formal and lengthy review by central office and board. Principals have little influence in this process.	Some may be modified after a formal review is conducted by the central office. Principal wishes are generally supported.	They may be modified by principals with approval of the appropriate district administrator.	They may be modified by principals, but full justification is required and the central office must be notified.

Notes:

58. Do district leaders recognize the professional expertise of teachers?

1	2	3	4	5
District leaders have no confidence and are openly critical of the expertise of teachers.	District leaders have confidence in a few selected teachers, but clearly not the majority.	District leaders' confidence in teachers varies greatly from school to school.	District leaders have a moderate level of confidence in their teachers.	Teachers' expertise is highly respected and sought by district leaders.

Notes:

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59. Do district leaders recognize the professional expertise of their administrative staff?

1	2	3	4	5
District leaders have no confidence and are openly critical of the expertise of administrative staff.	District leaders have confidence in a few selected administrators, but clearly not the majority.	District leaders' confidence in administrators varies greatly from school to school and within the central office.	District leaders have a moderate level of confidence in their administrative staff.	Administrative staff expertise is highly respected and sought by district leaders.

Notes:

60. How are professional development activities related to district/building improvement priorities?

1	2	3	4	5
Professional development activities are seldom related to school improvement priorities directly or indirectly.	Some professional development activities are indirectly related to school improvement. They are seldom tied to specific district/building priorities.	Most professional development activities are focused on school improvement. Some are tied to specific district/building priorities.	Most professional development activities are referenced to specific district/building priorities.	All professional development activities are referenced to specific district/building priorities.

Notes:

61. How adequate are incentives (e.g., recognition, release time, and money) provided by district leaders for professional development participation?

1	2	3	4	5
There are no incentives for participation in professional development activities.	Limited incentives are provided for participation in professional development activities.	Traditional incentives are provided. They are generally competitive with those offered by most surrounding districts.	A variety of traditional and innovative incentives are provided. Staff are generally satisfied with the incentives offered.	A wide range of traditional and innovative incentives are provided. The district and staff have some flexibility in the selection of incentives received.

Notes:

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62. In what ways does the district expect principals and teachers to be accessible and responsive to parents?

1	2	3	4	5
No clear expectations have been set.	The district supports parent-teacher/principal interaction. The district does not monitor how frequently interactions occur.	The district encourages interaction in traditional ways (e.g., PTA, Back-to-School Night).	The district actively encourages interaction. A variety of traditional and innovative means are used.	The district actively plans for interaction and specific mechanisms exist to provide for it. It is included in both principal and teacher evaluations.

Notes:

63. How are district-wide test results made known to the public?

1	2	3	4	5
District-wide test results are not reported publicly.	District-wide test results are released and published to meet state regulations.	District-wide test results are published and shared with parents. No individual building results are released.	All district and school test results are published and shared with parents.	All district and school test results are published and shared with parents, and actively discussed in community forums.

Notes:

64. What opportunities does the district provide for parents to become involved in the education of their children?

1	2	3	4	5
No programs are encouraged or provided.	District leaders encourage, but provide no meaningful opportunities.	District leaders encourage parent participation. Some schools have developed programs. No district-wide programs exist.	District leaders encourage parent participation. All schools have developed their own programs. No district-wide programs exist.	District leaders support both school and district-wide efforts to involve parents.

Notes:

65. What is the involvement of parents and community in the development and evaluation of district goals, programs, and policies?

1	2	3	4	5
There is little parent or community input.	There is superficial parent and community input. Their input is usually required by law.	There is some formal input through meetings or surveys. Some parents or community members play influential roles on committees.	There are standing committees that participate in the development or evaluation process.	In addition to standing committees, district leaders seek parent/community input and involvement through a variety of informal channels.

Notes:

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66. How often are school facilities used by the community?

1	2	3	4	5
School facilities are not available for community use.	Some school facilities are available for community use during non-school hours, but seldom are used.	School facilities are available for community use during non-school hours. Adult education and sports leagues are the primary users.	School facilities are available for community use during non-school and school hours. There is regular use by community organizations.	School facilities are available for community use during non-school and school hours. There is widespread use.

Notes:

67. Does the district have a plan for soliciting and using assistance from businesses and other community organizations?

1	2	3	4	5
The district does not seek or encourage external assistance.	The district accepts discrete and small contributions (e.g., instructional materials, supplies, funding) from external agencies. More interactive assistance is not encouraged.	The district accepts a variety of assistance from external agencies, usually at their initiative.	The district actively seeks assistance to promote its priorities. General guidelines have been developed.	The district has a comprehensive, proactive and well-publicized plan. Partnerships are actively sought with local organizations to make full use of their resources on students' behalf.

Notes:

DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS AUDIT

QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: This questionnaire is a part of a comprehensive assessment of the district's educational programs and operations. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather your perceptions of the district. There are no right or wrony answers. Instead, your perceptions, based on your experiences in this district, are most important. It is therefore critical that you complete the questionnaire as carefully and candidly as possible. Your responses will be kept confidential and reported only in aggregate form.

Read each of the statements below and determine the extent to which it is true of your district. For each statement, choose the answer that best matches your opinion or experience, and then circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

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To what extent do you believe that the following is true of your school district?	Not at all		To some extent		Completely
1. The district expects all students to achieve the same high standards.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The board discusses quality of instruction issues at every meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Measurable student outcomes are defined for all district goals.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The district's goals in all areas are taken into account in determining the goals of individual schools.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Decisions about student promotion from one grade to the next are guided by district standards.	1	2	3	4	5
6. District-wide curriculum guidelines set the parameters for all instructional activities.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Curriculum guides provide sufficient flexibility to meet all students' needs and take advantage of all staffs' skills or expertise.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Student groupings for instruction can be easily changed to meet student academic and social needs.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The district provides assistance to and monitors the progress of students not meeting district academic standards.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The district provides assistance to and monitors the progress of students not meeting district behaviorial standards.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The district's process for adopting curriculum is understood and followed.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The district's process for selecting textbooks is understood and followed.	1	2	3	4	5

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	Not at all		To some extent		Completely
13. Curriculum and instruction are articulated across grade levels and among schools.	1	2	3	4	5
14. The central office makes certain that special needs programs are highly coordinated with the regular curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Central office staff are expected to spend at least half of their time monitoring and improving curriculum and instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Principals are expected to spend at least half of their time monitoring and improving curriculum and instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Efforts to minimize instructional interruptions are carried out across the district.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Monetary incentives, release time, and recognition are provided to staff who work with students in curriculum-related activities outside of the school day.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Frequent teacher assessment of student progress is required across the district.	1	2	3	4	5
20. District-wide assessment of student academic progress is conducted annually in all subject areas and at all grade levels.	1	2	3	4	5
21. District-wide tests are well-aligned with the district's curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5
22. School staffs receive and discuss school test results which are presented in a timely and usable manner.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Curriculum reviews occur on a regular cycle and are carefully done.	1	2	3	4	5

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	Not at all		To some extent		Completely
24. Procedures for monitoring curriculum implementation are followed across the district.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Procedures for evaluating teaching staff are defined and followed across the district.	1	2	3	4	5
26. The provision of feedback and assistance to teaching staff by supervisors is carried out throughout the district.	1	2	3	4	5
27. All of the district's educational programs are adequately funded.	1	2	3	4	5
28. At least 70 percent of the district's budget is spent on instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
29. The distribution of resources across the district is seen by all as fair and appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Adequate resources are provided for coordinated curriculum development in all areas.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Adequate resources are provided for ongoing staff development at the district and school levels.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Personnel openings are widely publicized.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Highest ranked candidates are offered available positions in the district first.	1	2	3	4	5
34. The principal's recommendations for school staff appointments are those brought to the board for approval.	1	2	3	4	5
35. The district's salary scale allows it to maintain and recruit a highly qualified teaching staff.	1	2	3	4	5

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		Not at all		To some extent		Completely
36.	The district's salary scale allows it to maintain and recruit a highly qualified administrative staff.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	Central office staff are actively involved in the ongoing supervision and development of school staff.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Principals have flexibility in preparing and controlling their budgets.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	School staffs have input in the development and review of their school budgets.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	The board and superintendent agree on their mutual roles and responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	The board and superintendent are able to resolve differences on administrative issues in a short period of time.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	The board annually evaluates the superintendent by establishing and monitoring his/her performance on annual goals.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	Increasing teacher-student contact time is a high board priority that has resulted in some program or policy changes.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	Staff initiative and dedication are encouraged, recognized and rewarded in a variety of ways across the district.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	Outstanding student performance in all areas is encouraged and recognized across the district.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	All staff have the opportunity to participate in the development and evaluation of district goals, programs and policies.	1	2	3	4	5

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	Not at all		To some extent		Completely
47. Teachers have opportunities each day to work and plan together as professional colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
48. Schools and offices are clean and well-maintained.	1	2	3	4	5
49. Work space in schools and offices is adequate and flexible enough to meet staff and student needs.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Schools and offices are safe and secure for staff and students.	1	2	3	4	5
51. School improvement is stressed in all district plans, publications and activities.	1	2	3	4	5
52. School improvement efforts and plans are developed jointly by the central office and school staff.	1	2	3	4	5
53. Realistic timelines for school improvement efforts are negotiated and set by district leaders and program staff.	1	2	3	4	5
54. The district actively encourages and supports initiative and calculated risks by staff to improve school programs.	1	2	3	4	5
55. District leaders stress and incorporate research findings on effective school practices in their work with schools.	1	2	3	4	5
56. School staff are held accountable by the district for developing and implementing school improvement plans.	1	2	3	4	5
57. District instructional policies and practices may be modified by school principals to address particular school deficiencies with due notice to district staff.	1	2	3	4	5

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	Not at all		To some extent		Completely
58. Teachers' professional expertise is highly respected by district leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
59. Administrators' professional expertise is highly respected by district leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
60. Professional development activities are related to specific district or building improvement priorities.	1	2	3	4	5
61. Incentives for participation in professional development activities are available to staff and are effective at encouraging their participation.	1	2	3	4	5
62. The district actively plans for and expects principals and teachers to interact regularly with parents.	1	2	3	4	5
63. District and school test results are published and shared with parents and the community.	1	2	3	4	5
64. Efforts to involve parents in the education of their children are supported at both the school and district level.	1	2	3	4	5
65. Parents and community members are actively involved in the development and evaluation of district goals, programs and policies.	1	2	3	4	5
66. School facilities are widely used by the community during non-school and school hours.	1	2	3	4	5
67. The district has a plan to actively solicit and use assistance from business and other community organizations.	1	2	3	4	5

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IX. ANALYSIS AND REPORT FORMS

This section contains all of the necessary blank forms to use in aggregating, analyzing, and summarizing the audit interview and questionnaire responses. The first form, *District Effectiveness Audit Analysis Form,* should be used to aggregate and analyze the audit interview and questionnaire responses. It contains coding charts for transferring responses from the individual interview or questionnaire forms, and mean charts for calculating item and standard means. Two sets of this form should be photocopied to aggregate the interview and questionnaire responses.

The second form, *District Effectiveness Audit Summary Sheet,* should be used to list the individual item and scale means for the interview and questionnaire responses. You will only need one copy of this form. It will be especially useful in reviewing the audit data and preparing the final report.

The third and final form is the *District Effectiveness Audit Bar Graph.* This form contains two bar graphs—one for the interview responses and one for the questionnaire. It should be used to present the audit results graphically. You will need to make seven photocopies of this form.

District Effectiveness Audit Analysis Form

Setting Goals and Standards

1. The central mission of the school district is the provision of high quality instruction to all children.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
1							
2							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product}}{\text{Total}} \div \frac{\text{Item}}{\text{N}} = \frac{\text{Item}}{\text{Mean}}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product}}{\text{Total}} \div \frac{\text{Standard}}{\text{Total N}} = \frac{\text{Standard}}{\text{Mean}}$$

2. The school district has defined a set of educational goals based on the district mission statement that are specific enough to permit assessment of progress.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
3							
4							
5							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

Managing Curriculum and Program

1. Decisions about the curriculum, including content, sequence, time allocations, and student access, are based on district goals.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product}}{\text{Total}} \div \frac{\text{Standard}}{\text{Total N}} = \frac{\text{Standard}}{\text{Mean}}$$

2. The district has policies to ensure that curriculum and instruction are coordinated.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
11							
12							
13							
14							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Item N}}{} = \frac{\text{Item Mean}}{}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Standard Total N}}{} = \frac{\text{Standard Mean}}{}$$

3. The district seeks to focus staff and student time on instruction and learning.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
15							
16							
17							
18							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	x	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Item N}}{} = \frac{\text{Item Mean}}{}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	x	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Standard Total N}}{} = \frac{\text{Standard Mean}}{}$$

1. The district requires regular and frequent monitoring of student progress.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
19							
20							
21							
22							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

2. The effectiveness of the curriculum is regularly evaluated.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
23							
24							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	x	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	x	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

97

3. Supervision and staff evaluation are used as methods for improvement of instruction.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
25							
26							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

Allocating Resources

1. Fiscal resources are sufficient to support district goals, satisfy state and federal regulations, and foster growth and improvement.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
27							
28							
29							
30							
31							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

2. The district's personnel policies are used in supporting school quality.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
32							
33							
34							
35							
36							
37							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

3. District leaders allow school staffs as much discretion as possible in the allocation of fiscal and human resources within the framework of district priorities.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
38							
39							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Item N}}{} = \frac{\text{Item Mean}}{}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Standard Total N}}{} = \frac{\text{Standard Mean}}{}$$

1. The board and superintendent have agreed on the scope and direction of their mutual roles and responsibilities.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
40							
41							
42							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Item N}}{} = \frac{\text{Item Mean}}{}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Standard Total N}}{} = \frac{\text{Standard Mean}}{}$$

2. District policies promote success among the staff and students.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
43							
44							
45							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Item N}}{} = \frac{\text{Item Mean}}{}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Standard Total N}}{} = \frac{\text{Standard Mean}}{}$$

3. District policies encourage and support staff input into decision making and collegial relationships among staff.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
46							
47							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

4. The district's schools and offices are pleasant places for students and staff.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
48							
49							
50							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

Making Improvements

1. District leadership demonstrates a commitment to improvement.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
51							
52							
53							
54							
55							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Item N}}{} = \frac{\text{Item Mean}}{}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{} \div \frac{\text{Standard Total N}}{} = \frac{\text{Standard Mean}}{}$$

2. The district has a long-range plan for improvement that defines specific targets for student outcomes.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
56							
57							
58							
59							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

3. Board of education policies and regulations enhance the capacity for change and provide for related development efforts.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
60							
61							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

Working with the Community

1. The district maintains frequent and open communication with the community.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
62							
63							
64							
65							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

2. School facilities are available and used by the community.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
66							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	×	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$$

3. The district makes effective use of external resources.

Coding Chart

Item	Response Choice 1	2	3	4	5	N	Item Mean
67							
Overall Standard							

Item Mean Chart

Response Choice	Item Totals	x	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Item N}} = \text{Item Mean}$

Standard Mean Chart

Response Choice	Standard Totals	x	Response Factor	=	Product
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		

$\frac{\text{Product Total}}{\text{Standard Total N}} = \text{Standard Mean}$

DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS AUDIT SUMMARY SHEET

	Interview Mean	Questionnaire Mean
Setting Goals and Standards		
1. The central mission of the school district is the provision of high quality instruction to all children.		
a. The district holds the same academic standards for all its students. (Item 1)		
b. The provision of high quality instruction in the district is discussed at all board meetings. (Item 2)		
2. The school district has defined a set of educational goals based on the district mission statement that are specific enough to permit assessment of progress.		
a. The district has defined measurable student outcomes related to its goals. (Item 3)		
b. The district has specific student promotion standards and requirements. (Item 4)		
c. The district goals have been used to set individual school goals. (Item 5)		
Managing Curriculum and Program		
1. Decisions about the curriculum, including content, sequence, time allocations, and student access, are based on district goals.		
a. The district has clear curriculum guidelines that are used to define classroom instruction. (Item 6)		

	Interview Mean	Questionnaire Mean
b. The curriculum guides provide for sufficient flexibility. (Item 7)		
c. District policies ensure that student grouping for instruction meets the needs of all students. (Item 8)		
d. The district ensures that appropriate assistance is provided to students not meeting district academic and behavioral standards. (Items 9 and 10)		
2. The district has policies to ensure that curriculum and instruction are coordinated.		
a. There is a clearly defined process for the adoption of curricula that is followed by the board and district staff. (Item 11)		
b. There is a clearly defined process for the selection of textbooks that is followed by the board and district staff. (Item 12)		
c. Curriculum and instruction are coordinated across grade levels and schools. (Item 13)		
d. The district has policies to insure that all special programs are coordinated with the regular curriculum. (Item 14)		
3. The district seeks to focus staff and student time on instruction and learning.		
a. Central office staff are expected to spend a majority of their time monitoring and improving curriculum and instruction. (Item 15)		

	Interview Mean	Questionnaire mean
b. Principals are expected to spend at least half of their time monitoring and improving curriculum and instruction. (Item 16)		
c. The district emphasizes minimizing interruptions in instructional time. (Item 17)		
d. The district encourages staff to work with students in activities outside the school day that are linked to the curriculum. (Item 18)		
Assuring Quality		
1. The district requires regular and frequent monitoring of student progress.		
a. The district requires frequent teacher assessment of student progress. (Item 19)		
b. District-wide assessment of student performance is conducted annually in all academic areas and at all grade levels. (Item 20)		
c. Tests used to assess progress are aligned with the curriculum. (Item 21)		
d. Student test results are provided to school staff in a timely and usable manner and are reviewed and discussed by staff. (Item 22)		
2. The effectiveness of the curriculum is regularly evaluated.		
a. Thorough curriculum review, K-12, is conducted on a regular schedule. (Item 23)		

	Interview Mean	Questionnaire Mean
b. The district has implemented procedures to monitor curriculum implementation. (Item 24)		
3. Supervision and staff evaluation are used as methods for improvement of instruction.		
a. Teaching staff evaluation is based on specific, district-wide criteria. (Item 25)		
b. Supervisors are expected to provide feedback and assistance to teaching staffs. (Item 26)		
Allocating Resources		
1. Fiscal resources are sufficient to support district goals, satisfy state and federal regulations, and foster growth and improvement.		
a. All of the district's educational programs are adequately funded. (Item 27)		
b. 70 percent or more of the district's budget is spent on instruction. (Item 28)		
c. District resources are perceived as being fairly distributed across the district. (Item 29)		
d. Resources for curriculum development are adequate and coordinated district-wide. (Items 30 and 31)		
2. The district's personnel policies are used to support school quality.		
a. All personnel openings are widely publicized. (Item 32)		
b. Personnel openings are filled only by the most qualified candidates. (Item 33)		

	Interview Mean	Questionnaire Mean
c. Principals are responsible for recommending appointments to the board. (Item 34)		
d. The district manages the salary scale to attract and retain the most effective instructional and administrative staff. (Items 35 and 36)		
e. Central office staff are actively involved in the ongoing supervision and development of school staff. (Item 37)		
3. District leaders allow school staffs as much discretion as possible in the allocation of fiscal and human resources within the framework of district priorities.		
a. Principals have flexibility in preparing and controlling their school budgets. (Item 38)		
b. Principals involve staff in the the development and review of school budgets. (Item 39)		
Creating a Positive Work Environment		
1. The board and superintendent have agreed on the scope and direction of their mutual roles and responsibilities.		
a. The board and superintendent agree on their mutual roles and responsibilities. (Item 40)		
b. The board and superintendent are able to resolve administrative disagreements. (Item 41)		
c. The board holds the district superintendent accountable for implementing district programs and policies. (Item 42)		

	Interview Mean	Questionnaire Mean
2. District policies promote success among the staff and students.		
a. In practice regarding class size, teacher assignments, and scheduling, district leaders give priority to teacher/ student contact. (Item 43)		
b. The district has procedures for identifying and publicly recognizing high performance and dedication by staff. (Item 44)		
c. The district has procedures for identifying and publicly recognizing high performance by students. (Item 45)		
3. District policies encourage and support staff input into district decision making and collegial relationships among staff.		
a. School staff participate in the development and evaluation of district goals, programs, and policies. (Item 46)		
b. District leaders encourage communication among school personnel by providing time for staff to get together professionally. (Item 47)		
4. The district's schools and offices are pleasant places for students and staff.		
a. Schools and offices are clean and well-maintained. (Item 48)		
b. Schools and offices provide adequate work space for staff and students. (Item 49)		
c. Schools and offices are safe for both staff and students. (Item 50)		

	Interview Mean	Questionnaire Mean
Making Improvements		
1. District leadership demonstrates a commitment to improvement.		
a. District leaders express the theme of continuous improvement in district plans, activities, and publications. (Item 51)		
b. District leaders perceive the school as the unit of change and improvement. (Item 52)		
c. District leaders provide adequate timelines for school improvement. (Item 53)		
d. District leaders encourage staff to take calculated risks in school improvement efforts. (Item 54)		
e. District leaders stress research findings on effective school practices in their improvement efforts. (Item 55)		
2. The district has a long-range plan for improvement that defines specific targets for student outcomes.		
a. District leaders hold school staffs responsible for school improvement plans aimed at improving student achievement. (Item 56)		
b. District leaders give principals authority to modify instructional policies and practices to address particular school deficiencies. (Item 57)		
c. District leaders recognize the professional expertise of teachers and administrators. (Items 58 and 59)		

	Interview Mean	Questionnaire mean
3. Board of education policies and regulations enhance the capacity for change and provide for related development programs.		
a. Professional development activities are related to district and building improvement priorities. (Item 60)		
b. District leaders provide adequate incentives for participating in professional development. (Item 61)		
Working with the Community		
1. The district maintains frequent and open communication with the community.		
a. The district requires principals and teachers to be accessible and responsive to parents. (Item 62)		
b. Student test results are made known to the public. (Item 63)		
c. The district provides opportunities for parents to become involved in the education of their children. (Item 64)		
d. Parents and community members are involved in the development and evaluation of district goals, programs, and policies. (Item 65)		
2. School facilities are available and used by the community.		
a. School facilities are widely used by the community during school and non-school hours. (Item 66)		
3. The district makes effective use of external resources.		

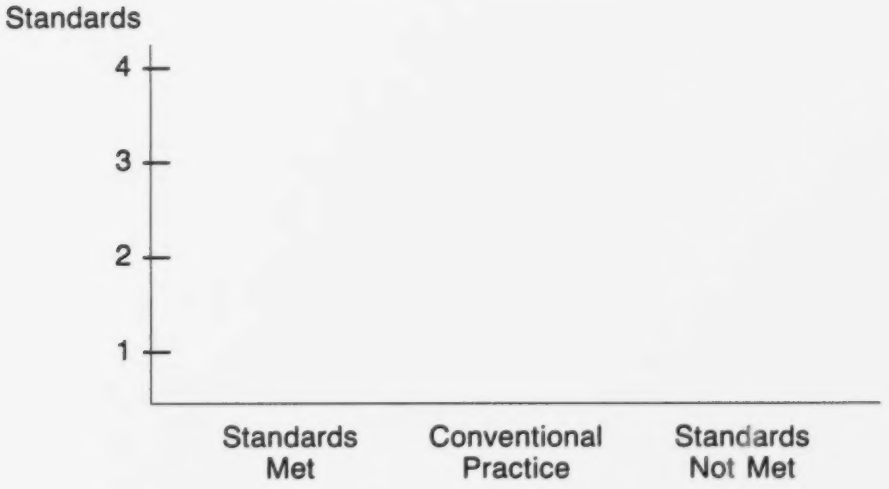
	Interview Mean	Questionnaire Mean
a. The district has a plan for soliciting and using assistance from external agencies. (Item 67)		

District Effectiveness Audit Bar Graph

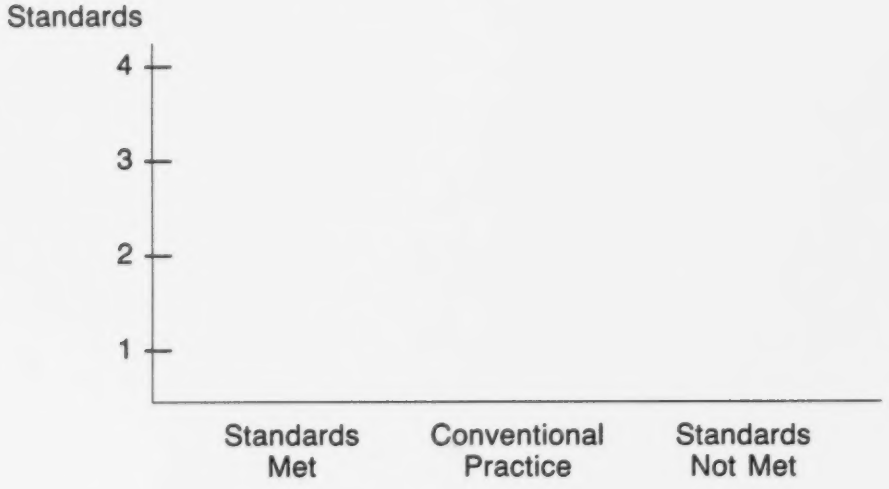
_____ – _____ Standards

District Effectiveness Audit Area — Number

Interview Responses



Questionnaire Responses



Appendix A
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Appendix B
DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS TASK FORCE

(Affiliations as of 1984)

Dr. Joan Abrams	*Superintendent, Red Bank Borough School District, NJ*
Dr. Julius Bernstein	*Former Superintendent, Livingston Township School District, NJ*
Ms. Stephanie Craib	*Principal, South Brunswick Township School District, NJ*
Dr. Mathew Glowski	*Superintendent, Alpine School District, NJ*
Dr. Joseph Kreskey	*Deputy Superintendent, Edison Township School District, NJ*
Dr. Penny Lattimer	*Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, New Brunswick School District, NJ*
Dr. George Libonate	*Assistant Superintendent, Ridgewood Village School District, NJ*
Dr. Marian Leibowitz	*Assistant Superintendent, Teaneck School District, NJ*
Ms. Delores McNeil	*Board Member, Newark School District, NJ*
Mr. Bernard Roper	*Assistant Superintendent/Board Secretary, Livingston Township School District, NJ*
Dr. Richard Schuck	*Principal, Mendham Borough School District, NJ*
Dr. Jeffrey Smith	*Professor, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ*
Ms. Willa Spicer	*Assistant Superintendent, South Brunswick Township School District, NJ*
Dr. James Swalm	*Assistant Superintendent, Woodbridge Township School District, NJ*
Mr. Richard Willever	*Superintendent, West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District, NJ*
Dr. Carole L. Willis	*Board Member, Montclair School District, NJ*

Appendix C
DELPHI PANELISTS

(Affiliations as of 1984)

Dr. Kenneth Carlson	*Professor, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ*
Mr. Rocco Carri	*Guidance Counselor, Atlantic City School District, NJ*
Ms. Janet Fegely	*Teacher, Jersey City School District, NJ*
Dr. Mary Lee Fitzgerald	*Superintendent, Montclair School District, NJ*
Dr. Richard Gerber	*Board Member, Cresskill School District, NJ*
Mr. Richard Harclerode	*Board Member, Mercer County Special Services School District, NJ*
Mr. Thomas Jannarone, Jr.	*Superintendent, Asbury Park School District, NJ*
Mr. Ernest Kimmel	*Board Member, Hopewell Valley Regional School District, NJ*
Dr. Kenneth King	*Assistant Superintendent, East Orange School District, NJ*
Mr. David Maltman	*Principal, Glen Ridge School District, NJ*
Dr. Carl Marburger	*Senior Associate, National Committee for Citizens in Education, Columbia, MD*
Dr. Evelyn Ogden	*Assistant Superintendent, Moorestown Township School District, NJ*
Dr. Betty Ostroff-Carpenter	*Superintendent, Glen Rock School District, NJ*
Ms. Sharon Piety-Jacobs	*Research Associate, Center for Policy Research, New York City, NY*
Ms. Zita Pruitt	*Principal, Teaneck School District, NJ*
Mrs. Carolyn Smith	*Board Member, High Bridge School District, NJ*
Dr. Frank Smith	*Professor, Teachers College, Columbia University, NY*
Dr. Jeffrey Smith	*Professor, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ*
Mr. Henry Thompson	*Principal, Plainfield School District, NJ*

Dr. Sayr Uhler	*Professor, Fordham University School of Education, NY*
Mr. Ronald G. Watson	*Principal, West Windsor-Plainsboro School District, NJ*
Dr. Jan Weaver	*Dean of Professional Studies, Glassboro State College, NJ*
Mr. John White	*Office of Legislative Services, State of New Jersey, Trenton, NJ*